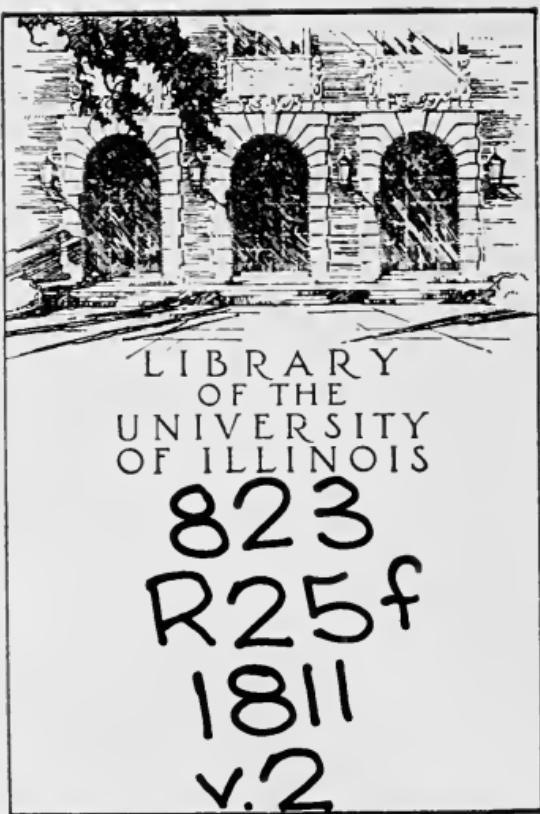


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Rear Admiral Halkett







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# FATHERLESS FANNY,

*&c. &c.*

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**VOL. II.**



**FATHERLESS FANNY;**  
OR,  
THE MEMOIRS  
OF A  
**LITTLE MENDICANT,**  
AND  
*HER BENEFACTORS.*

—  
A MODERN NOVEL, IN FOUR VOLUMES.  
—

BY MRS. EDGEWORTH,  
AUTHORESS OF "THE WIFE; OR, A MODEL FOR  
WOMEN," &c. &c.

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VOL. II.

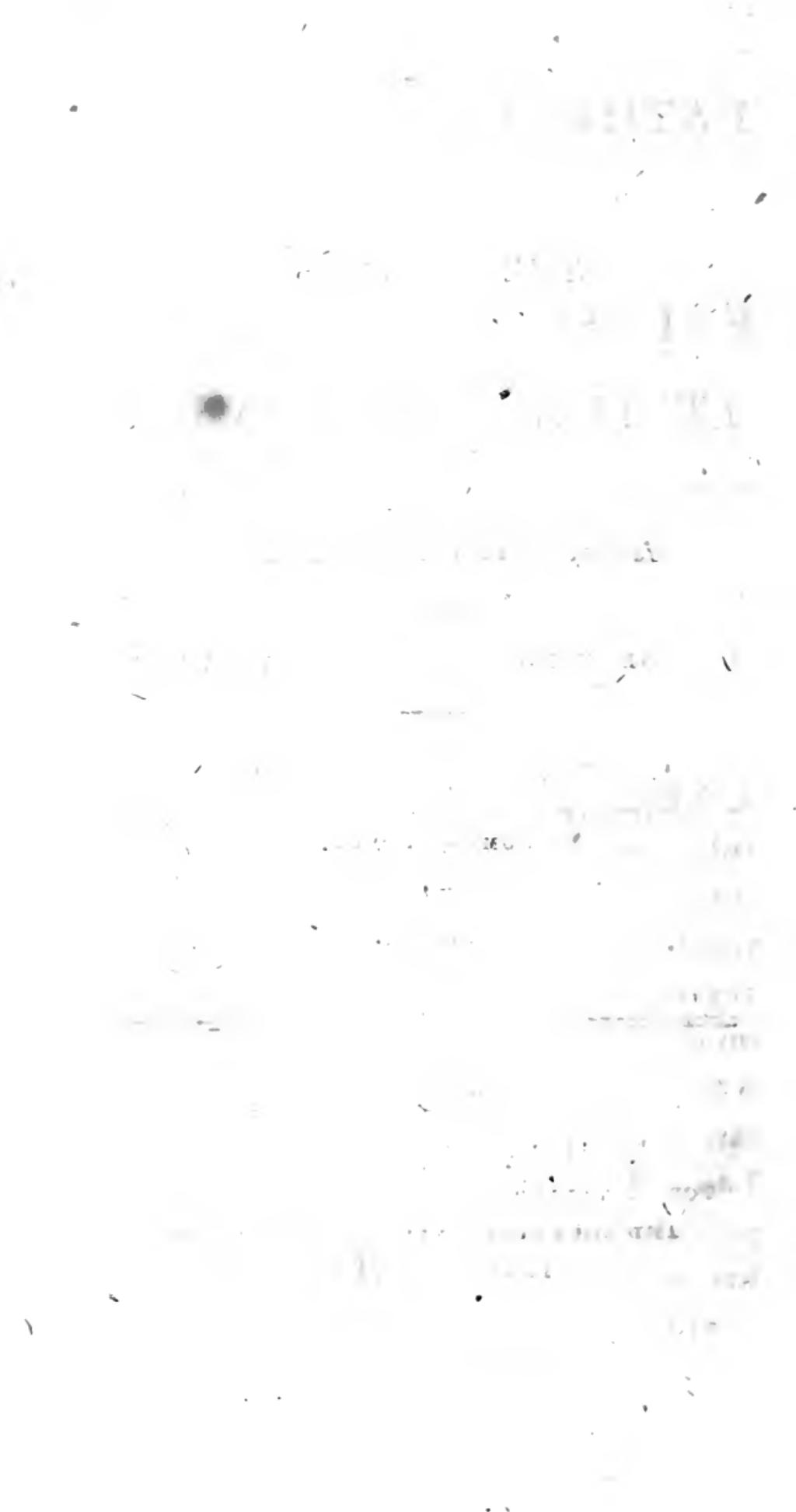
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# FATHERLESS FANNY,

&c. &c.

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## CHAPTER I.

---

### *A Wedding!*

UNDER such impressions the result may be anticipated. Lady Ellincourt remained firm, and Fanny inconsolable. The latter was conveyed, in a state of mind bordering on despair, to the house of Col. Ross, where the tenderest attentions were lavished upon her by the amiable Lady Maria, and every scheme of pleasure devised likely to dissipate her melancholy. In the mean time

Lady Ellincourt pursued her journey, accompanied by her son, on every turn of whose countenance she dwelt with unceasing anxiety, and endeavoured to trace in his minutest actions, and most unguarded expressions, the fatal effects of the passion she imagined he had imbibed from the too lovely object of both their affections.

What pleasure did it give this anxious mother then, when the amount of all her scrutiny, proved the supposition an error, and convinced her beyond the possibility of a doubt, that she was mistaken in her conjecture, at least as far as related to her son. In regard to poor Fanny, she did not feel the same assurance; the excess of her grief—the artless manner in which she had expressed it—and her wish, so fervently uttered, that she were, indeed, ne-

cessary to Lord Ellincourt's happiness, continually recurred to Lady Ellincourt's mind, and filled it with sadness; for so dear was Fanny to her maternal heart, that the idea of her being doomed to suffer under the influence of a hopeless passion, gave the most poignant feelings of anguish to her bosom.

Arrived at Lisbon; Lady Ellincourt soon found benefit from its salubrious atmosphere, and her son had the satisfaction of seeing his mother's health improving hourly.

A few weeks after their arrival, they were agreeably surprised, one morning, by a visit from Mr. Barlowe, who informed Lord and Lady Ellincourt that he and his whole family were come to reside some months, perhaps years, at Lisbon; as their stay depended upon the life of an infirm relation, who was im-

mensely rich, and who intended to make Mr. Barlowe her heir, had entreated him to come and reside near her, during the little time that she had to stay in this world, and that in order to comply with that request he had brought his whole family with him, intending to go to England, after the death of his relation, and fix his abode there, as his estate in Jamaica had been disposed of, previous to his quitting that Island. The evident pleasure with which Lord Ellincourt listened to this recital, delighted his mother, as she saw plainly in his eager, but confused inquiries after Emily Barlowe, that the interest that sweet girl had excited in her son's bosom, was still undiminished in fervor.

It gave her still greater satisfaction, when she learned, by a seemingly careless inquiry, that Emily

was disengaged, or at least that no positive plan of a matrimonial nature had yet occupied her father in respect to her.

The eldest daughter was on the point of marriage, with a young West Indian, of immense fortune, whose attachment to her was sufficiently potent to induce him to follow her to Lisbon; whether curiosity, or, perhaps, coquetry had led her, in spite of her lover's entreaties, and her father's remonstrances, who had intended to witness her nuptials before he left Jamaica.

The haughty Caroline, however, chose to enjoy the triumph of leading her captive from one quarter of the globe to the other, and her vanity was not a little inflated when she found her influence strong enough to

accomplish her wishes. The gallantry of this ardent lover devised a thousand *fêtes*, for the gratification of his beloved mistress, and on these occasions Lord Ellincourt was sure to make one of the party, and by his attentions to Emily, to prove that she too had a lover no less ardent than her sister's.

To talk about Fanny, their mutual favorite, was, at first, their excuse for being so often seated near each other, but by degrees another topic, more agreeable to both, was substituted in the place of Fanny, and the result was an application to Mr. Barlowe for his permission to address his daughter, and as no reasonable objection could be started to the alliance, it was soon agreed to on all sides.

Lady Ellincourt had now the happiness of seeing her son united to

the lady she most approved of, and safe from the witchery of the fascinating Fanny. Yet still the good lady heaved a sigh now and then for the poor girl, lest her youthful heart should have been touched by the influence she had dreaded for her son. The letters which her ladyship received from her favorite, did not, however, give any reason to suppose her so affected, for when she replied to the one in which Lady Ellincourt had spoken of her son's intended union with Emily Barlowe, Fanny thus expressed herself—

“ Thank you, dearest dear mamma, for your charming news. Oh ! what a happy girl will your Fanny be, when she sees her dear papa and her dear Emily together, and thinks that they will never more be parted, and that she shall always live with them, and love them, and see them every day ! ”

These expressions certainly had not the appearance of a *hopeless attachment*; yet still Lady Ellincourt had taken the idea so strongly in her head, that, like most old ladies when they form an opinion, she did not like to give it up, and acknowledge herself in an error, even to herself.

## CHAPTER II.

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*A Female Rattle!*

IN the mean time Fanny “ who never dreamt of love,” was passing her time in the full enjoyment of innocent delight. The spirits at sixteen are very elastic, and her sorrow for the loss of her dear Lady Ellincourt’s society, soon gave way to the kind attentions of the affectionate Lady Maria, who spared no pains in the friendly task of amusing her dear Fanny.

Col. Ross was no less attentive, no less kind to the happy girl, but far less successful in his efforts to please.

It was not that Fanny felt ungrateful for his kindness, but that she experienced sensations of repugnance, she could not account for, whenever he addressed himself to her, particularly when they happened to be alone ; for then there was a fervor in his manner, a look in his eyes, as disagreeable as it was new to her ; and which, though it roused her resentment, she dared not to complain of, as she knew not why she felt offended, although the emotions of anger was irresistible.

Col. Ross had penetration enough to see that he was no favorite with Fanny, and this he attributed to a prepossession in favor of Lord Ellincourt, rather than any deficiency in his own powers of pleasing ; and the same vanity suggested the probability of gaining upon the unsuspecting heart of his intended victim, and

supplanting the image of Lord Ellincourt, which he supposed was cherished there, with all the fervor of a first love. Amongst the friends to whom Fanny was now introduced by her new protectors, was a young lady of immense fortune, of the name of Stanhope, who was like most other heiresses, a spoiled girl in the fullest sense of the word.

Accustomed from her infancy to have her will, the law of all about her, she had reached the age of eighteen, without having been once contradicted. Miss Stanhope was therefore the epitome of caprice, and fashionable folly. Yet was she naturally of a generous disposition, and perfectly good tempered. This young lady had hitherto resided with a grand-mother, whose doating affection had been the cause of all her follies.

This lady was lately dead, and the care of Miss Stanhope's person and fortune had developed upon the Marquis of Petersfield, whose ward she was, and at whose house she was to reside, until her marriage, which was expected to take place in a few months.

This alliance had been projected by the parents of the young people, during their infancy, and was considered a most advantageous *union of property* for both parties. The young nobleman intended for Miss Stanhope's husband, was the Duke of Albermarle, who was about four years older than herself, and also an orphan, and only child.

The young duke had been abroad some years, on account of the delicate state of his health, for which the climate of Sicily had been recommended, by his physicians. He

was now on the point of returning to his native country, in order to fulfil his father's will, by marrying Miss Stanhope.

Lady Ellincourt had been absent several months, at the time of Fanny's introduction to Miss Stanhope, and it was declared absolutely necessary for the perfect re-establishment of her health, that her ladyship should remain in Portugal some months longer, a circumstance which gave the utmost alarm to poor Fanny, whose terrified imagination was continually presenting to her the dangers of her benefactress's protracted stay, in a country so formidably threatened by the rapacious invader.

Miss Stanhope laughed at her fears, " My dear girl," said that wild young lady, " I perceive you are as fond of Lady Ellincourt, as I was of my poor grand-mamma ; and if you

live with her much longer you will be just such a fool as *I am*; so I think it will be an excellent thing if the French should run away with her, and not let her come home any more."

"Lady Ellincourt is certainly very indulgent to me," replied Fanny, "but she never spoiled me."

"There's a conceited puss," interrupted Miss Stanhope, "she wishes people to think that *she* can bear indulgence better than *I* can, and that all the old women in the world cannot *spoil her*. Well child," added she, laughing, "since you are *indulgence proof*, by your own confession, you must promise to spend the honey moon with the poor duke and me, when we are married, for we shall be vaporized to death, depend upon it, until we get used to each other's ways."

"You seem to have formed a strange idea of conjugal felicity, Miss Stanhope," replied Fanny, "to talk of being vapored to death in the society of your husband, so soon after your marriage."

"Formal creature!" rejoined the mad-cap, "I'll venture to lay a wager, when thou art married, thou wilt trot about, arm-in-arm, with thy lord and master, like Darby and Joan, and talk of the supreme felicity of *unlimited confidence and congenial spirits.*"

"I hope," said Fanny, smiling, "if ever I do marry, I shall be able to realize your charming picture, or else I would rather live single."

"Live single, my dear!" interrupted, "Miss Stanhope, why that is the extent of human felicity, in my ideas of happiness. I would give half my fortune this minute to be al-

lowed to live single ; at least until I could find somebody amiable enough to make me change my mind."

" Is not the duke amiable ? " asked Fanny.

" I really cannot tell," replied Miss Stanhope, " I have never seen him, since he was an Eton boy, and then the *animal* was well enough to look at, but I always hated him because I knew I should be obliged to marry him."

" But who can oblige you to marry his Grace," said Fanny, " against your inclination ? You have no parents alive, and surely your guardian's power cannot extend to such violence."

" You are a little simpleton," answered Miss Stanhope, " and know nothing about the world, or its ways, I can see that, so I must teach you. It is but too often seen that frail mor-

tals are apt to repine at the unequal distribution of the good things of this life. This is a most silly calculation, the possessions of the wealthy have always their concomitant miseries, supplied either by the pride, avarice, or ambition of their relatives. The wise junto of fathers, mothers, uncles, and aunts, that made up this wise match for the poor Duke of Albemarle and me, took infinite pains to strike the balance between those that envied *his* title and *my* riches, and the then unconscious possessors of the baubles, by dooming us both to be tied together, whether we liked it or not. Whichever refuses to fulfil the compact, forfeits the bulk of their fortune to the other, and is to suffer the punishment of poverty, and repentance all the remainder of their life, for the delinquency. Now, though I

would give *half* my fortune to be off the wedding, I should not like to lose the *whole*, and therefore I must submit to be *noosed*. The duke I dare say is of the same mind, but I suppose, though he might *prefer* my fortune *without* myself, to the taking it with all the incumbrances ; yet he would not like to give me his largest estate, to be off the bargain. Thus you see are two people going to be tied together to please their dead papas and mammas, who wish each other at the Antipodes."

Whilst Fanny listened to Miss Stanhope's wild description of her embarrassing situation, the smile of gaiety forsook her lip, and tears trembled in her eyes. "Merciful Heavens!" thought she, "how inscrutable are thy ways ! The rich heiress of incalculable wealth is an object of pity, to the pennyless or-

phan, whose daily maintenance depends upon the bounty of a stranger!"

"Moralizing, I wager," said Miss Stanhope, looking earnestly in Fanny's face, "yes, yes, I see it in that twinkling eye, and care-fraught brow. I dare say, my little nun would renounce the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and run into a cloister or any where, rather than marry a man she did not like. Oh! I can see a very eloquent exordium ready to escape the ruby boundaries of that pretty little mouth, which, I dare say, would be very edifying to any little miss or master, that would twirl their thumbs, and listen to it: but keep it in, my dear, for it will be lost upon *me*. I can neither moralize nor sermonize, nor listen to those who do; I am a predestinarian; what *must* be, *will* be; so if I am to have

the Duke, I *shall* have him, and if I am *not* to have him, some Giant, or Genii, or *young Lochinvar*, will come just in time to carry me off at the last moment, and then *you* shall write me word whether the bridegroom behaved like the poor fool in *Marmion*, or whether he took another wife, as he ought to do."

" Oh *I* will have nothing to do with your wedding," replied Fanny, " nor your bridegroom either, for you talk so shockingly upon the subject, that you frighten me, I assure you."

" Did you never hear, my dear," said Miss Stanhope " of boys making a great noise to drown their own fears, when obliged to go through a church yard, at night. Such is my case at this moment ; I rove and talk nonsense to banish unpleasant thoughts that crowd upon me; were I to suf-

fer my spirits to flag, I should find it impossible to raise them again, so

“ Away with melancholy!”

and the lively girl left the room singing that popular air, with no small portion of Catalani’s sweetness and vivacity.

Fanny’s artless sweetness, and the gaiety resulting from innocence, that so particularly characterised her, rendered her a great favorite with Miss Stanhope. Her vivacity was congenial to her own, but far more equal in its tenor. Unaccustomed to controul, the slightest contradiction, the most trifling disappointment, had the power to discompose Amelia Stanhope, and put her into the “ *pouts*,” as she herself styled her fits of ill-humour; and whenever the demon of ill-temper spread his malign influence, Fanny was the only person

who could effectually dispel the cloud that obscured her countenance, and restore the capricious girl to her smiles again. Miss Stanhope became therefore the inseparable companion of Fanny, and as Lady Maria Ross positively refused to let her charge become a guest at the Marquis of Petersfield's, as Miss Stanhope was continually teizing her to be, that young lady passed nearly the whole of her time with her new friend, at Lady Maria's house in Grosvenor Street.

Miss Stanhope was very fond of riding on horseback, and so eager was she for her favorite to partake of the amusement, that she presented her with one of the most beautiful horses that she could purchase, at which Fanny was not a little delighted, as she was as partial to the exercise, as her lively friend, and had

learned to be a tolerably expert horse-woman, during her summer visits to Lady Ellincourt's country seat.

Miss Stanhope had a carriage appropriated for her own use, and this conveyed the young friends out of the town, where the horses, attended by two grooms, in Miss Stanhope's livery, waited their pleasure.

These rides formed the most delightful part of Fanny's life, for she was far from having any predelection in favor of nocturnal amusements; and although Miss Stanhope insisted upon her accompanying her wherever she *could* go, yet she would often have preferred the quiet retirement of her own chamber, to the brilliant ballroom, thronged opera, or motley masquerade.

Some of Lady Maria Ross's friends made a point of inviting Fanny to their entertainments, particularly

when they perceived what a great favorite she was with the rich and celebrated Miss Stanhope, but a great number declined showing her that favour, from the aristocratical fear of making acquaintance with some obscure person, whom *nobody* knew.

Fanny's story, as far as Lady Ellincourt was acquainted with it, was generally known, as the hope of tracing Fanny's family, by detailing her adventures, had induced that good lady to talk more of them than she would otherwise have done. Her ladyship had strictly adhered to the request made in the letter addressed to Miss Bridgeman, by the person who put Fanny under that lady's care; namely—not to add any name to the simple appellation of Fanny by which only she had hitherto been distinguished.

These precautions, without having

the desired effect, had exposed the sweet girl to the malevolent remarks of the envious and the unfeeling, and often had she experienced the mortification of hearing the inquiry of a stranger, respecting her name, answered by some ill-natured insinuation, from those whose envy had been excited by the eulogium that preceded the question.

One evening, in particular, a gentleman, whose attention had been long fixed upon Fanny, asked a lady who was sitting next him, if she could inform him who that beautiful girl was, "I never beheld such a lovely creature," added he, in a tone of rapturous admiration.

"The girl is a perfect mystery," replied the ill-natured fair one, "I don't believe any body knows who she is unless, indeed, it is the Ellincourt's. Some people suppose she is

Lord Ellincourt's daughter, but for my part I think it much more likely she is his mistress, and I am astonished that any body will admit such an unaccountable person to their parties. She has no name but that of Fanny, and she is generally calied by way of distinction, Fanny *nameless!* But I think it is past a joke to be obliged to sit in the same room, with a person of such doubtful *origin*, and indeed, for what we can tell, of such doubtful *character!*"

"I do not wonder," answered the gentleman, drily, "that any lady should object to sitting in the same room with that lovely creature, who is not proof against the envy natural to her sex; for, however dubious her *origin* may be, her claims to admiration are undoubted, and that is what few women will excuse in her."

Fanny had heard all that passed,

for she was placed so near, it was impossible to avoid it ; and her confusion may be imagined. When she was talking to Miss Stanhope, the next day, she mentioned the distress she had suffered, adding, “ that she preferred staying at home to the being exposed to such cruel remarks.”

“ My dear creature,” replied Miss Stanhope, “ all this arises from that fiddle faddle Lady Ellincourt, permitting your story to be exposed, and persisting in calling you by the name of Fanny, only. Tell me candidly is not such a proceeding calculated to raise the curiosity of the quietest creatures in the world, and to set the Giant observation staring at you, wherever you go ? Now, if Lady Ellincourt, with her old-fashioned ideas, as stiff and as formal as Queen Elizabeth’s ruff, chuses to behaye so ridiculously, surely Lady

Maria Ross might have had more sense; she might have given you some fine-sounding sirname, and trumped up a probable story about you, that would have quieted all the he and she gossips that visit her, and then every thing would have gone on smoothly; but never mind I have a scheme in my head, and I will put it in execution, the first opportunity, and, depend upon it, it will answer."

"What is that, dear Amelia?" said Fanny, anxiously.

"Oh! never mind," replied Miss Stanhope, "you shall know nothing about it, until my plot is ripe. The beauty of a novel consists in well-managed surprises, and I am determined mine shall be a first-rate performance. Do you know Lord Somertown?"

"No," replied Fanny, "I have heard his lordship's name, but I never saw him."

"Oh! then you have a great pleasure to come," said Miss Stanhope, "he is the greatest quiz in nature, and I hate him abominably. He is the Duke of Albemarle's uncle and guardian; there is nothing in the world would please me so well as to see the wretch stand in the pillory, but I am afraid I shall never attain to such good fortune. However if I can but succeed in plaguing him, I declare I shall be the happiest girl in Christendom."

"I hope if you are going to play any tricks with Lord Somertown," said Fanny, looking grave, "that, my dear Amelia, will not bring *me* into the scrape, for you know what would be tolerated in you, would be deemed unpardonable in me."

“ Oh ! don’t frighten yourself,” replied Miss Stanhope, “ you shall have no hand in the plot, although the heroine of the piece.”

“ How the heroine ? dear Amelia, you frighten me,” said Fanny looking alarmed.

“ Nay never look so terrified,” replied her lively friend, “ I don’t intend you to *marry* Lord Somertown, although that would be an excellent method of plaguing him, if you had *my* spirit. I would be bound to break his heart in three months ; but you are too gentle, and too good for such a task, so I don’t think of *that* scheme.

“ No, no, he *must* be tormented, and I think I know how.—They say he broke his niece’s heart by his cruel usage, and if I can find the way to *his*, I will remunerate him as he deserves.

"I dare say there is not a spot bigger than half a split pea, in his whole heart that is vulnerable to the sense of feeling, and my skill must be exerted to find it out, and transfix it with the shaft of remorse,"

"Do what you please to *Lord Somertown*," said Fanny, "but for Heaven's sake spare *me*, for I feel the most unaccountable dread of being implicated in the hoax, be it what it may?"

"You are a silly child," answered Miss Stanhope, laughing, "and your *unaccountable* dreads must not spoil the getting up of my play."

"Don't make it a *tragedy*," said Fanny emphatically.

"No, my dear, it is to be a *Melo-Drama*, suited to the taste of the times—something between an

*Opera and a puppet-show, with a great deal of Pantomimic gestures, Operatic Pathos, and fashionable want of Common sense."*

## CHAPTER III.

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*An Adventure.*

FANNY had always been accustomed to early rising from her infancy, and therefore, unless she went to bed very late indeed, she always, in fine weather, took a walk before breakfast.

As Lady Maria Ross was a *Dormouse*, she knew nothing of this indulgence, or she certainly would not have suffered a girl of such extraordinary beauty as Fanny, to go strolling in the Park of a morning, accompanied only by her maid who was very little older than herself,

and far less fit to be trusted. The Grove in the Deer Park, was Fanny's favorite stroll, and one beautiful morning, in May, having taken a longer round than usual, she determined to rest herself beneath the shade of one of the large trees, in that beautiful spot.

Her maid, Betty, had seated herself near her mistress, on the grass, and was expatiating, in her simple dialect, on the preference that ought to be given to a walk, such as they had had, to the unwholesome custom of lying in bed, in a close room, until "the sun was ready to burn *their noses*," to use an expression of her own.

"Well the ladies may want to wear such a heap of red powder on their cheeks, Miss Fanny," continued the girl, "for sure enough they stew themselves so, they must

be, for all the world, like a boiled turnip, until they have done themselves over with paint! Well miss, you take the right method to look ruddy and wholesome, and that's what makes people call you so deadly pretty. Yes, and look there stands a gentleman as thinks so, I am sure, for he looks, for all the world, as if he was planet-struck, as my grandmother used to call it. Do, dear Miss Fanny, just look at him, it will do your heart good to see what a fool he looks like."

Fanny turned mechanically to look at the object Betty had pointed out to her. At a little distance from the spot where she was sitting, she beheld a tall gentleman habited in black, of the most elegant form, whose countenance wore the interesting cast of settled melancholy. His large dark eyes were fixed upon Fan-

ny with a look of inquiry in which sorrow seemed blended with curiosity. So absorbed too was he in the contemplation, that he attempted not to withdraw his eyes, when Fanny turned to observe him. Confused at the scrutinizing glances of the stranger, Fanny arose to depart, without making any answer to Betty's animadversions.

"There miss," said the girl in a discontented tone, "now you must go and stew yourself up at home, instead of taking the fresh air, as you ought to do, and all along with that saucy jackanapes, staring at you so. Well I wish I was a man, I would soon teach him better manners."

Fanny walked on in silence, and with a hurried step, whilst Betty followed her reluctantly, and continually turning her head to observe

the stranger, at length she exclaimed  
“ well to be sure, if that dismal  
looking man is not following us, I  
wish I may never be married.”

“ Betty,” replied Fanny, in an  
angry tone, “ you behave so ridicu-  
lously, that it is no wonder you ex-  
cite the notice of every body that  
passes.”

“ Dear me, Miss Fanny, don’t go  
to lay the blame upon me, for you  
know very well the gentleman is  
looking at you ; so that, I dare-say,  
he does not know I am here, no  
more than nothing at all !”

Betty talked so loud, and stared  
about her so, that she verified Fan-  
ny’s accusation of attracting the no-  
tice of every body that passed her.  
A gentleman, on horseback, had  
been observing her some time, and  
when he drew quite near, he jumped  
off his horse, and giving it to his

groom, he came up to the terrified Fanny, and placing himself familiarly by her side. "For Heaven's sake, my sweet girl," said he, attempting to take her hand, "where did you pick up that strange monster for an attendant. I am sure you might get a good price for her at Exeter Change, to be shown amongst the Wild Beasts. Do you take her out with you to serve as a foil to your beauty?"

Fanny made no reply to this unmeaning jargon. But Betty felt herself so exasperated at the mention of being shown amongst the wild beasts, that she could not contain her spleen, and she said, in an angry tone of voice, "that *some people* that found fault with *some people*, was a deal more *properer* to be sent amongst the Wild Beasts, than those they sneered at; and I wish," added she,

tossing her head disdainfully, “ that those that be dressed like gentlemen, would behave like gentlemen, and not go about affronting young ladies that are walking quietly along.” The idea of ranking herself with her lady never entered poor Betty’s head, but the gentleman understood her that she meant to be included amongst the *young ladies*, she had mentioned, and he burst into an immoderate fit of laughter, and throwing his arm familiarly round Fanny’s waist, he expressed his hopes that *she* was not affronted with him, and as to the other *young lady* he did not care about *her*.”

Distressed and terrified beyond expression, Fanny struggled to get from her persecutor, who seemed equally diverted by *her* terror, and her attendant’s angry remonstrances. As it was early in the morning, but

few people were in the park, and the gentleman, who had assailed Fanny, feeling no fear of a rescue, amused himself by seeming to let her escape, and then catching her again, until her exhausted spirits gave way, and she burst into tears.

At that moment the stranger, whose observation of Fanny had first excited Betty's loud exclamations, advanced to the assistance of the distress girl, and waving his hand with an air of dignity, that immediately awed the rude object of his resentment. "Desist, Sir," said he, in a tone of authority, "that young lady shall not be insulted, whilst *I* can protect her."

"And pray, Sir," said the brute, "who are you?"

"A man," replied the majestic stranger, "and that is a title *you* can lay no claim to, whilst you debase

yourself so low as to insult a defenceless woman!"

Ashamed of the part he had acted and yet unwilling to acknowledge his error, the gentleman appear'd inclined to resent the interference of Fanny's protector, and muttered something about satisfaction. But with a dignity truly irresistible, the interesting stranger again waved his hand, "Begone!" said he, "and talk not of having sustained any degradation from me, since it were impossible, by the utmost exertion of malice, to place you in a more despicable light than that in which I first beheld you."

Then turning to Fanny, "Rely safely on my protection, sweet girl," said he, "and rest assured that I would sooner forfeit my life than suffer you to be insulted." Confused beyond the power of expression,

Fanny could only curtsey in silence, to her deliverer, and pursue her way towards home, with a quickened step, in which agitation and alarm were still visible. Her persecutor, however, had quitted the field, and mounting his horse, was out of sight in a minute; as he turned away from her, however, he said, in an insulting tone, "he hoped that as she had found somebody more to her mind, she would act conformably to her *real* character, and not give herself airs that did not belong to her.

"My dear young lady," said the benevolent stranger, who had just rescued Fanny, "I feel persuaded that you are as innocent as you look, but I entreat you in future not to walk out without some attendant more proper to protect you, than the one you have now got. This town and its ways I can perceive are new to

you, and you are therefore the more liable to encounter such treatment as that you have just escaped from, and, believe me, you may not always be so fortunate as you have now been. My sex are in general the staunch supporters of each other, and but too much inclined to join in oppressing, rather than in protecting those whose guardians they are by the laws of nature and humanity. The strong resemblance you bear to a dear departed friend of mine, first attracted my notice; and as I gazed upon your features, a train of melancholy recollections crowded upon my mind, and I mechanically and without design, followed your footsteps. I am most happy that I did so, as it gave me an opportunity of being of service to you!"

Fanny thanked her deliverer in terms of grateful respect, and as-

sured him that in future she would never venture to walk out unprotected.

They had now reached the confines of the Park, and as they were preparing to cross the road into Park Lane, Col. Ross overtook them on Horseback. He immediately dismounted, and giving his horse in charge to his groom, joined the party, with astonishment painted on his countenance.

Fanny, who saw that he expected an explanation, briefly related the circumstances of the insults she had received, and acknowledged the kind interference of the benevolent stranger. When Col. Ross had listened to the recital, he thanked the stranger for his timely assistance to his young ward, adding, in a tone that shewed he did not wish to cultivate the acquaintance, "The young lady

being now under the immediate protection of her guardian, your walk, Sir, need not be any farther interrupted ;" and then, with a stiff bow, he wished the gentleman a good morning.

The bow was returned with equal stiffness, and measuring the Colonel with a penetrating glance, the stranger said to Fanny, " Farewell sweet girl, may Heaven protect and keep you from the sly designs of the wicked, as well as the open attacks of the licentious. Remember the advice of a friend *trust no man*, for as the poet ays, too truly :—

" Women, like Princes, find few *real* friends !"

Then waving his hand in the same dignified manner he had done before, and which seemed peculiar to himself, the stranger turned round and left them, pointing his footsteps towards

the place he had left. As soon as Fanny reached Grosvenor Street, she retired to her chamber, where she was long before she could recover her wonted serenity. Her terror, indeed, had subsided, but the recollection of the interesting stranger affected her in a manner she could not account for.

Every look of his beautiful countenance, every word he had uttered, seemed indelibly engraved upon her memory, and she dwelt with a mixture of pain and pleasure upon the most interesting image her fancy had ever yet contemplated.

The ungrateful manner in which Col. Ross had treated her deliverer, pained her to reflect upon, and she felt surprised that a man of the Colonel's refined breeding should have shown himself so wanting in common civility, on an occasion which cer-

tainly did not warrant such an infringement on the laws of politeness. Fanny little imagined that jealousy had actuated the Colonel's behaviour, whose suspicious eye had beheld in the stranger a more formidable rival than Lord Ellincourt himself.

It was true that he appeared to be past the first bloom of youth, but it was impossible to behold him, and not confess that he had a most graceful form and a most beautiful countenance. The soft melancholy that shaded his fine features excited so powerful an interest in the hearts of his beholders, that it was not easy to forget, after once seeing him.

At breakfast Fanny related the adventures of the morning, and received a lecture from Lady Maria, for her imprudence in walking out so far without any companion but a silly country girl, more likely by her

awkwardness and folly to excite, than repel impertinence.

In this reprimand Colonel Ross joined with some severity, at the same time reproaching his lady with her carelessness and want of vigilance, in permitting a young lady, who was under her protection, to be so much her own mistress as to be able to go out every morning without her knowledge.

“ I don’t know,” added the Colonel, “ what may be the consequence of Fanny’s adventure; the man who delivered her from her first persecutor, being, in my opinion the most dangerous of the two !”

“ Why do you think so, Sir ?” asked Fanny, blushing deeply as she spoke.

“ Because,” replied the Colonel, “ I believe him to be a notorious fellow that I remember seeing tried

for a swindler, some years ago, and if my conjecture is right, he will no doubt endeavour to make something out of this adventure."

" Oh dear!" said Lady Maria" I am frightened to death. We shall be robbed I dare say. Indeed Fanny you must be very careful, and above all things never speak to that man, if you should happen to see him, let his appearance be ever so prepossessing, or the company you see him in ever so respectable. Swindlers have the art of introducing themselves every where; indeed you cannot be too much upon your guard."

This was the very distrust Col. Ross had wished to inspire, and he was happy to see his artifice had produced the desired effect upon his lady, as he well knew she would effectually prevent the approach of the stranger, of whose future at-

tempts to obtain the confidence of Fanny, he was really apprehensive, but from a motive very different to the one he had assigned.

Fanny did not feel herself at all inclined to give credit to Col. Ross's insinuations against her deliverer, and she told him that she thought it illiberal to asperse the character of a man he did not know, upon no better foundation than the slight recollection of a face that might resemble the stranger's, without the least proof, in his power, of his being the unworthy person he represented him. "For my part," added the ingenuous girl, "I must confess, nothing short of conviction should induce me to think unworthily of that gentleman. His manner was so gentle, yet firm and manly, that it at once excited my esteem and respect. The expression of his eyes, too, spoke

the goodness of his heart, and there was a something in the tone of his voice that seemed persuasion itself”

“At *seventeen*,” replied Col. Ross, “such a superficial way of judging people may be excused, but, believe me, Fanny, when I tell you as a friend, that it would be very dangerous for you to rely upon so erroneous a guide, in chusing your acquaintance. The sound of a man’s voice may be very pleasing, and the expression of his eyes well calculated to ensnare the hearts of young girls like you, without his possessing *one virtue* to entitle him to your esteem.”

Fanny was silenced, without being convinced, and the conversation was here interrupted by the arrival of Miss Stanhope, who came to ask Fanny to ride out with her.

“If Fanny is prudent she will refuse your request,” said Col. Ross, “she has made one excursion too many this morning.”

“How so?” asked Amelia.

The Colonel then told the story in his own way, whilst Fanny out of all patience at the account he gave of her kind deliverer, took up the subject, and drew a picture of her new acquaintance that delighted Miss Stanhope. “Oh,” said that giddy girl, “I am dying to see your swain, Fanny, I love pensive countenances beyond description. I hope you are not far gone in the *tender passion*, for you may depend upon it I shall become your rival, provided your delineation be a faithful one.”

“It will be an honorable rivalry to be sure,” said Col. Ross, with a sneer, “a competition who shall accompany the hero on his voyage to

Botany Bay, for there his career will end, depend upon it. He is a swindler, or I am a dunce!"

"I should think the *latter* assertion far more likely to be true than the *former*," said Miss Stanhope, laughing, "Fanny's account of the charming creature convinces me he is some *incognito* of consequence, and the glory of developing his real character will, perhaps, be mine. Thank you, my dear girl, for giving me something to do, that will protect me from the Demon Ennui. The delightful task of finding out who this stranger is, will amuse me for this month to come. But mind you must look out for him, and show him to me."

"You are likely to have better employment, Miss Stanhope," said the Colonel, "employment that will effectually defeat the attacks of that

foe to the happiness of the idle and the vain, which you have just mentioned."

"And pray, Sir, to what employment do you allude," asked Amelia.

"The Duke of Albermarle is expected in town to-day, and it will be hard if the preparations for your nuptials cannot supersede the idle curiosity this silly story has excited."

"A pretty remedy for ennui, upon my honor," said Miss Stanhope, "I am sure the very thoughts of my nuptials, as you call them, give me the vapours in an instant. Married indeed! I am sure if the Duke is as much averse to the match as I am, our union will make an excellent subject for a tragedy, and may be called—'The Double Sacrifice.'"

"Oh the perverseness of human nature," exclaimed Lady Maria, "how many girls would be glad to

change places with you. - The Duke is a very handsome man, I understand, and very amiable. His title is ancient, and his fortune equal to your own."

" The two last considerations are the iron links that unite our destiny," said Miss Stanhope, " all the rest is of no consequence. But I'll tell you what, my dear friend, there is nobody that can judge so well of the fitting of the shoe, as the person that wears it. The world may think mine a bullion lot, but it must not be very angry with me for dissenting from its opinion. I would give half my fortune, and *all* the honor of being a Duchess, for the delightful privilege of chusing for myself."

Fanny sighed deeply, and then blushing, because Col. Ross looked at her as if he wished to penetrate her thoughts. She rose from the

table, and walked to the window. "Nay, don't sigh about it," said Miss Stanhope, "perhaps I might not chuse your swain if I were to see him, and if I should I would give you the Duke in his stead, and you hear what a fine bargain his Grace is!"

"You are a mad creature, Amelia," said Lady Maria, "but I would advise you to see the Duke before you give him away, for you confess you do not know whether you like him or not."

"That is the only thing I *do* know," replied Miss Stanhope, "I am sure I do not like him, and I am sure I never shall like him, and all I have to wish is, that he may not like me, for *he* has the power of declining the alliance by the trifling sacrifice of ten thousand per annum, but poor I must lose *all* my fortune,

if I rebel; but enough of this hateful subject, you have given me the horrors, so if you do not let Fanny ride with me this morning, to drive them away, I will never forgive you."

"If Fanny rides with you, I must make one of the party," said Col. Ross, "lest she should meet with either of those *impertinent* fellows she saw this morning."

"By all means," said Miss Stanhope, "we shall have no objection to a beau. Will you go, Lady Maria?"

"Oh no," hastily answered Col. Ross, "Maria is such a timid rider, I beg we may not have the *bore* of her company?"

"I did not intend to intrude upon you," said Lady Maria, suppressing the tears that rose to her eyes, and endeavouring to speak in a gay tone, "but I remember the time when you

used to be delighted if I would *con-descend* to allow you to *instruct* me in the art of the *manège*."

" My dear Maria you talk of things that happened a hundred years ago," said the Colonel.

" I can only wish then," replied his lady, " that instances of the same kindness were more recent!" And as she spoke she left the room.

Fanny soon followed, to prepare for her ride, and the Colonel and Miss Stanhope were left *tête-à-tête*, for half an hour. With the utmost *finesse* he endeavoured to persuade Amelia into a belief that the person who had rescued Fanny was a person of bad character, pretending that he had a perfect recollection of his person, having seen him tried for the offence he alleged against him.

" All I dread is," said he, " that this artful fellow will presume, upon

the service he has rendered Fanny, and endeavour to interest her in his favor, the girl is so romantically grateful that it will not be difficult to accomplish such a scheme, and then depend upon it we shall suffer by some unforeseen imposition. Join your influence then, dear Miss Stanhope, with mine, and help to frighten Fanny out of her good opinion."

"If you had not made such a parade about this story," replied Amelia, "perhaps I should have been on your side, but now you seem to set your heart upon it I shall disappoint you, for I love contradiction, so expect to see me on the opposition benches when the matter comes before the house."

Col. Ross laughed in apparent good humour, but he devoutly wished his fair friend at New York for her perverseness.

When Fanny had put on her riding habit, she returned to the breakfast-parlor, and Miss Stanhope's carriage conveyed the trio to the spot where the grooms were waiting with the horses.

The animal Amelia rode, was very spirited, and she frequently expressed her fears that he would be too much for her skill to manage. Fanny, who was the better horsewoman, offered to change with her friend ; but the Colonel endeavoured to persuade her not to venture such a hazardous undertaking, but rather to return to the carriage, and defer the ride until another day, when a safer horse had been provided for Miss Stanhope.

The giddy Amelia refused to listen to this salutary advice, however ; and as Fanny repeated her offer, the exchange was made. For sometime the fiery animal seemed to submit to

the superior skill of his new manager, and all went smoothly on until the sudden elevation of a boy's kite startled him, and darting forward with fury, he presently left his companions far behind him.

Terror deprived Fanny of all power to check his speed, and losing her balance, she was thrown to the ground, with a violence that stunned her; and when Col. Ross and Miss Stanhope came up to her they found her lying, apparently lifeless, in the arms of a gentleman, who had stopped his carriage when he saw the accident and flown to her assistance.

For the first few minutes they were too much absorbed in terror, to observe the countenance of Fanny's supporter, but when, after the application of cold water to her temples, she revived, and assured her

friends that she was not materially hurt, Miss Stanhope instantly recognised, in the features of the gentleman who had assisted Fanny, too strong a resemblance to the Duke of Albemarle, to be in doubt of his identity.

Though only a boy of fourteen when she had last seen him, the peculiar cast of his countenance was too remarkable to be mistaken, and she had soon the satisfaction of observing that she had the advantage over her intended husband, and was convinced that her own form had undergone a more material alteration in the space of seven years, than his had done, since he appeared not to have the slightest idea who she was.

CHAPTER IV.

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*A Hoax !*

THE Duke of Albemarle, for it was really him, offered his carriage to convey Fanny home, but Amelia replied “ that as *Miss Stanhope's* own carriage would be there immediately, there was no occasion to intrude upon his politeness.” A groom had been sent in search of the coach, which had conveyed the ladies as far as Edgeware Road, and it was but a very little while before it made its appearance.

The Duke instantly recognised the arms, and became the dupe of Miss

Stanhope's artifice, by mistaking Fanny for his bride elect: a hoax Amelia had determined upon playing him as soon as she found herself unknown to him.

The Duke assisted Fanny to the carriage, and then took his leave, without taking any notice of the discovery, he thought he had made, and proceeded to town, full of the most pleasing anticipations of happiness, in his approaching union with a girl of such exquisite beauty, as the one he had just been admiring.

He retained but a very slight recollection of the infantine grace that had been presented to him as his future wife, before he left England, and could only remember that he thought her a *pretty child*, although there was certainly nothing in her appearance that promised such a full

harvest of perfection, as that he had just been contemplating.

Lord Somertown's house was to be the Duke's town residence, until he should be able to fix upon one to his mind, and he alighted there in the highest spirits imaginable, in about half an hour after he had parted with Fanny.

His uncle was pleased to see him so cheerful, as the Duke's last letter had been written in a style of despondency that shewed he was not very sanguine in his expectations of happiness, in his approaching marriage.

When the Duke related the accident that had brought him acquainted with Miss Stanhope, Lord Somertown was still better pleased, as the description he gave of the impression her beauty had made upon his fancy was in the true style of a

lover. "When I saw the lovely creature thrown from her horse," said his grace, "terror was the instinctive emotion of my heart, but little did I imagine how deeply my own happiness was concerned in her safety. Thank Heaven," added he, "the sweet girl, though greatly frightened, was not hurt."

"Well, well, boy," answered Lord Somertown, "I am glad it is as it is, for it would have been an inconvenient thing if the girl had been killed *before* you had married her; her fortune is very necessary to the repair of yours, as that long chancery suit with the *pretended* heir to your title, cost an immensity of money. I am glad you like the *doll* so well, too, as that will make the matrimonial pill go down easier. For my part I think all the girls of fashion are exactly alike now-a-days,

they all resemble *walking sticks* in their shapes, and French puppets in their faces ; their dress consists of exactly enough drapery to attract one's eye, whilst it is sufficiently scanty and transparent to shock one's modesty, and there is so much unmeaning frippery in their conversation, and so little delicacy or good sense in their conduct, that I am convinced that the man who marries for *love* in these days, must be either a *boy* or a *dotard*."

" Your lordship's picture of female excellence is not very inviting," said the Duke.

" *Female excellence !*" rejoined Lord Somertown, " why there is no such thing ; but, however, I do not wish to set you against the potion you are *obliged* to swallow, you will find out its *bitterness* time enough. Apropos, who was with Miss Stan-

hope, in her unlucky excursion this morning?"

"A lady and a gentleman," replied the Duke.

"The *lady* I dare say I can guess at, for she has picked up an *adventress* who is making a good thing out of her, and I hope the first act of your power, when you marry Miss Stanhope, will be to break that connection? I hope the *gentleman* was not a rival though: girls are such vain creatures that they cannot live without an admirer, and I have begun to be afraid, for some time past, that you would stay so long abroad, that some needy fellow would snatch up the prize, before you returned."

"I heard the young lady, who was with Miss Stanhope, call the gentleman Col. Ross." said the Duke.

"Oh, then all is well," rejoined Lord Somertown, "Col. Ross is mar-

ried, so there are no fears from that quarter."

"I am glad to hear it," said the Duke, "for there was so much anxiety painted on his countenance that I could almost have ventured to swear he was at least an admirer of the lady, who had met the accident. But, my dear Uncle, you talk of Miss Stanhope's marrying some *needy man*, as if her fortune were at her own disposal. I thought her father's will insisted upon her marrying me, on the penalty of losing the bulk of her fortune, and that *I* was bound by a similar injunction to marry none but Amelia."

"A mere fairy tale invented by my ingenuity," rejoined Lord Somerton, "to make you both cement the union, I have set my heart upon: As you have fallen in love with the girl, I may venture to disclose the

secret to *you*, but I beg you will guard it carefully from Amelia, on whose docility we must not rely a single instant after that restraint is taken off."

"Deceive her no longer I entreat you," said the Duke, "to be the object of Miss Stanhope's *unrestrained* choice would make me happier than I can express, and how can I ever know that I am so, whilst she acts under the influence of the supposed clause in her father's will?"

"I did not imagine you were such an ideot, Henry," exclaimed Lord Somertown, angrily, "you talk of things that never existed. No woman ever had an **UNBIASSED** choice in a husband. They are influenced by vanity, avarice, or ambition, and some times by all *three*. When you know as much of the sex as *I* do, you will despise them as completely

as *I do*. There is no animal so perverse as a headstrong girl, trust not your happiness to her keeping therefore. I have confided my secret to you, and if you betray it I will find a method of revenging the affront. You ought to know me, Henry," continued Lord Somertown, looking sternly at the Duke. " I have done much to be revenged of those who scorned my power, and *you* have benefitted by it: take care therefore how you incur my displeasure; no one ever yet did so with *impunity*. You *know* the ties of blood are nothing in my estimation, when opposed to excited *vengeance*. Remember that, and tremble! I leave your mode of acting to yourself, after this *caution*."

The Duke shuddered as he listened to this exordium, for he well understood his Uncle's allusion, and he

would gladly have given his title and estate to be freed from the unpleasant sensations the recollections it awakened, excited in his bosom. He knew, however, the vindictive temper of Lord Somertown too well to hazard the slightest contradiction.

“Where my duty and my inclination go hand-in-hand,” said his Grace, “there is little fear of my disobeying your lordship’s injunctions: to marry Miss Stanhope is the most ardent wish of my heart: that I should do so is your lordship’s: I shall not therefore risk the possibility of a disappointment, by divulging the important secret!”

## CHAPTER IV.

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*A Hoax.*

IN the meantime Miss Stanhope, and Fanny returned to town ; the former full of spirits and drollery secretly exulting in the imposition she had practised, of which, however, she avoided giving the slightest hint to either of her companions, fearing lest they should impede the success of her plot, before she had had an opportunity of laying its foundation, with the security she meditated, and which once put in train she felt certain would defy their genius to overturn.

Fanny's spirits were flurried with the accident she had met with, and she was but ill able to bear the railing with which her lively friend attacked her.

"My dear Fanny," said Amelia, "I really think it would be the safest expedient, we could hit upon, to send you into the country immediately."

"And why so?" asked Col. Ross; for Fanny was silent.

"Why don't you perceive," rejoined Miss Stanhope, "that she can neither walk or ride without meeting with adventures and knight-errants. Depend upon it she will be ran away with some day, and then we shall lament the temerity that exposed her to such danger."

Col. Ross bit his lips. It was a suggestion his own anxious heart had often presented to his fancy, but he

did not dare to avow it. "Now don't you think it very likely to happen?" continued Miss Stanhope, looking archly, "you were afraid of the Adonis she met in the morning, but *I* have the most reason to be afraid now, for I will wager a thousand guineas she steals my lover from me before I am a week older."

"Your lover!" re-echoed the Colonel, "for Heaven's sake, Miss Stanhope, who do you allude to?"

"To the Duke of Albemarle," replied she, "that was the invincible knight who just now spread his fostering arms to shelter this beauteous damsel."

As Miss Stanhope spoke, Fanny's cheeks were dyed with crimson, and a deep sigh escaped her. An indistinct feeling like disappointment shot through her heart. She was sorry to hear that the stranger she

had thought so agreeable, was a man of whom she must think no more. She tried, however, to turn the conversation, by observing that she wondered the Duke had not recognised Miss Stanhope.

“ I dare say,” answered Amelia, laughing, “ that the Duke thinks me so much improved in beauty, that he does not suspect his happiness in being destined to so lovely a creature, and so his *humility* painted out a fair one more upon a par with his own merits. Well never mind, my dear, I will not pull caps with you. The Duke does not please me but I shall not say so. Let him cry out first. A few thousands per annum will be a trifling sacrifice in the cause, for which Mark Anthony lost the *world!*”

In this unmerciful manner did Amelia continue to roast poor Fanny,

until the carriage stopped at Col. Ross's door, and, for the first time since they had become acquainted, Fanny felt rejoiced to get rid of her agreeable friend, who could not command time enough to alight to tell Lady Maria Ross "The *wonders of the ride*," a circumstance she lamented most pathetically.

Col. Ross was as glad as Fanny to see Amelia depart, for the tempest of jealousy her suggestions had raised in his bosom, required the retirement of his closet to subdue and bring within the limits of his usual self-command. To his closet therefore he flew as soon as he entered the house, and Fanny repaired to her own chamber, where throwing herself on her bed she gave way to the flood of tears that had long been struggling for freedom. She had suppressed them whilst in Amelia's

presence, because she feared she would attribute their flowing to a silly and sudden partiality, imbibed by a *first sight* impression, a species of romance Fanny had always condemned when conversing with Miss Stanhope upon the subject of attachment.

Scarcely indeed could she herself tell from whence the weeping propensity originated, but felt most inclined to attribute it to the influence of her wounded pride, which had shrunk from Miss Stanhope's raillery, with a degree of pain very unusual to the naturally humble minded Fanny.

“ Poor outcast Orphan as I am,” said the weeping girl, “ dependent on the bounty of strangers, and unblest even with a *name*. My nature assimilates not with such degrading circumstances. I feel no innate symp-

toms of baseness; why then should I be trampled upon by those whose fortunes are better, although their sentiments may be inferior to mine? Miss Stanhope is blest with fortune, and its sure attendants—*friends*. She can command admirers; it is ungenerous therefore in her to make my insignificance the subject of her amusement."

These reflections were the bitterest Fanny had ever made, the secret cause that made them so, I leave to my sagacious *female* readers to find out; not in the least doubting that they will be able to ascribe the effect to its genuine cause; and with those who are clear-sighted enough to unravel the mystery, I flatter myself poor Fanny will stand acquitted of *habitual* ill-humor. A little acrimony may surely be excused on so trying an occasion.

In a few hours after Miss Stanhope's return home, she received a note from the Duke of Albemarle announcing his arrival, and entreating permission to pay his compliments in person to the lady who held his future happiness at her disposal?

Amelia answered the note, and fixed the following morning for receiving the visit of the *impatient lover*. The Duke thought this interval an *age*, but he was forced to submit, and the mischievous Amelia enjoyed the double pleasure of reflecting on his present suspense and approaching disappointment. When the appointed hour arrived, the Duke was announced, and entered the apartment where Amelia was sitting at her music, with such a degree of eagerness, that he scarcely gave the servant time to name him, ere he

stood before her. His impatience, however, was not more evident than his disappointment ; when, on Amelia's rising to receive him, he perceived that she was not the lady he had expected to see. The words he had begun to speak faltered on his tongue, and he stopped short in the middle of a fine speech to the diversion of his cruel mistress, and the inexpressible confusion of his own feelings.

The Duke was accompanied by Lord Somertown : he did not therefore dare to account for his embarrassment, and that nobleman attributed it solely to the foolishness inseparable from a *boy's* attachment. The Marquis of Petersfield soon entered the room, and relieved him in some degree by turning the conversation upon general subjects.

After some little discussion of the po-

lities and news of the day ; Lord Somertown asked the Marquis whether he had purchased the pictures at Christie's which he saw him bidding for ?

“ I have,” replied Lord Petersfield, “ and if your lordship will do me the favor to give your opinion of a Titian, I have amongst the number, it will greatly oblige me ! ”

“ Certainly,” answered Lord Somertown, “ let us look at it directly ? The young people,” added he, nodding significantly, “ will excuse our leaving them together for a few minutes.” So saying, the two guardians left the room, and the Duke’s embarrassment returned with increased violence. Miss Stanhope who enjoyed her poor lover’s confusion determined to increase it. “ I little thought,” said she, smiling archly, “ when I received such po-

lite attention from your Grace yesterday morning, after my unfortunate fall; that it was to the Duke of Albemarle I was indebted for assistance; but your Grace seems to have forgotten the whole circumstance, for you have not once inquired how I am after my *fright*."

The Duke was struck dumb at this speech; he mechanically put his hand to his eyes, as if to ascertain whether they were *really* his own eyes; and Miss Stanhope burst into a fit of laughter that completely disconcerted him.

"It is time," said she, "to finish the joke. I perceive your Grace's distress, which is, indeed, an awkward one, and, although I have been mischievous enough to enjoy it for a little while, I cannot find in my heart to protract it any longer. I have entered most unwillingly into

the deceit that is practised upon you, and I feel myself unequal to the task of imposing any longer upon your credulity. I will therefore be candid, provided your Grace will pledge your word and honor that you will not own I have done so, until *I give you leave.*"

The Duke, whose curiosity was raised to the highest pitch by this preamble, and whose hopes began to revive at the same time, readily entered into the conditional promise, and Miss Stanhope proceeded with her *hoax*.

"Amelia Stanhope," said she, "is a whimsical creature, for, although I love her dearly, nobody is quicker in discovering her errors than I am. This giddy girl could not bear the idea of being introduced to her husband elect as a commodity he was obliged to take, whether he liked it

or not, and having read in some novel, I suppose, of the metamorphosis of lovers to render themselves more amiable in the eyes of those they wished to please, she determined to get up a little drama, which was to be performed in honor of your Grace's arrival. In this piece I have the principle part, for I am honored by personating Miss Stanhope, whilst she herself has assumed the simple guise which belongs to me, and which you will see her perform with admirable grace and *nai-vète*. In that disguise she expects to win your grace's heart, and if I have any skill in augury, her expectations are not ill-founded. Lord Somertown and the Marquis are both in the secret, and they are anticipating the pleasure of seeing your embarrassment, when you find yourself entangled in an attachment so seeming-

ly contrary to their wishes, and which the *denouement* of the piece is to dissipate in the prettiest manner imaginable. The moment I saw your grace enter the room this morning I recollect ed your features, and knew you for the gentleman who assisted Miss Stanhope yesterday morning. The hoax I knew therefore *must* fall to the ground, and this determined me to tell you of it first, and if yon have half a grain of wit, you will turn the tables upon the authors of it, by appearing to believe things as they represent them, and acquiescing in their wishes as to the proposed alliance; this will secretly mortify them, whilst you can ensure Amelia's good will by clandestine testimonies of your admiration, and by private marriage with her under her borrowed character, you can put the most romantic finish to the whole

affair. Rest assured of my assistance, provided you keep the secret ; and when you have seen the *pretended* Fanny, you will be better able to tell me *how far* you will like to proceed under *my* directions,"

It is impossible to describe the astonishment and delight that filled the Duke's mind as Amelia laid her pretended scheme before him ; but although he wondered, he did not doubt. He readily therefore promised to act under the direction of his treacherous guide, who in return assured him that he should see the *real* Miss Stanhope that night, if he would meet them at the Opera.

The arrangement was but just made when the two lords returned, and the Duke soon afterwards took his leave ; saying, as he quitted the room, " at the Opera, then Madam, I shall hope to renew the pleasure I

have enjoyed this morning?" Amelia nodded assent, and the lover departed, accompanied by Lord Somertown; neither of them dreaming of the trick Miss Stanhope had been playing.

She, however, was so diverted with the thoughts of it, and so delighted with the success which had crowned her first attempts, that she was in perfect ecstasies, and could scarcely perform the duties of her toilet, for laughing at the frolic.

## CHAPTER V.

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*Cross Purposes.*

As the Duke and Lord Somertown returned together in the carriage, the latter said, with a smile, "and do you really think the impression you have received *indelible*?" Do you believe your heart *invincible* to any other attachment?"

"My heart," replied the Duke, "must be very deceitful if it has not received a lasting impression. I think I shall not *easily* change."

"I am glad you speak *dubiously* upon the subject," answered Lord Somertown, laughing, "it shews

you are less of the *blockhead* than I took you to be, from your *first* rhapsody. I wish you to marry Miss Stanhope, but I don't think it necessarily follows that you should make a *fool* of yourself!"'

The Duke smiled, but he made no reply. He attributed Lord Somer-town's asperity not to his natural morose disposition, but to the particular mortification he felt at supposing he, the Duke, admired the *fictitious*, instead of the *real* Miss Stanhope.

Nothing more, however, passed on the subject between them ; and the Duke passed the hours that intervened between that and the Opera, in arranging his plans respecting the double part he was to act, so as to keep up the *farce* of attention to the *pretender*, and yet satisfy the rightful sovereign that he was devoted to her alone.

In the meantime Miss Stanhope called upon Fanny, to entreat her to accompany her to the Opera, and spend a few days with her at the Marquis of Petersfield's. Fanny did not appear much inclined to join the party ; but after a little persuasion, and a good deal of raillery upon her *sudden* predelection for solitude, she yielded to her lively friend, and promised to make one in the Marchioness of Petersfield's box that evening, and accompany Amelia home for a few days, provided the scheme were approved by Lady Maria Ross, who was also of the party, and about *half-past nine* they entered the Opera House.

The poor Duke had been there ever since the opening of the doors, devoutly cursing the fashionable folly which rendered it vulgar to see

the beginning of any public exhibition.

His Grace was in the pit, with his eyes fixed on that part of the gay hemisphere where he expected the rising of the star he worshipped. No sooner had he recognised the entrance of the party, than he flew to join them.

Miss Stanhope received his compliments with a smile, and turning to Fanny, begged leave to introduce *her friend* to his Grace.

“ *Miss Fanny*,” said she emphatically, “ I *would* add another name if I *could*, but I must leave that for your Grace’s ingenuity to supply in what manner you please.” The latter part of this was spoken in a low voice, and the arch smile that accompanied it, convinced the Duke that Amelia alluded to her own assumed character.

The admiration the Duke had felt at his first interview with Fanny was increased at this moment; there was a dignity in her look and manner he had not before observed, and the expression that beamed from her beautiful eyes was calculated to awe, as well as to enchant.

The cause of this change in the usual appearance of Fanny which generally gave the idea of feminine softness, rather than dignity, originated in the peculiarity of her feelings respecting the Duke.

His appearance had struck her as the most agreeable she had ever seen, before she knew who he was, and when she learnt the disagreeable truth, she instantly determined to subdue the slight partiality she felt. Miss Stanhope's raillery had roused her pride, and her promise not to "pull caps" with her for the Duke,

seemed to imply that she thought Fanny would be glad to attract his Grace's notice, if she could do it with impunity. "I wish not to interfere with Amelia's lovers," thought she, "and she shall see that the Duke is not an object to excite my ambition."

Full of these proud resolutions Fanny's eyes wore a look of *hauteur* very different from their usual expression ; yet was the change an improvement, as it gave a spirit to her beauty, that rendered it more striking and impressive.

Deep blushes mantled on her cheeks as the Duke paid his compliments to her, but the coldness with which she turned away from him, the moment he had done speaking, mortified, though it tended to increase his passion.

In vain did the Duke endeavour to engage her in conversation ; her laconic answers, politely, but coldly given, still terminated every subject he started.

In the coffee room, after the Opera was over, Lord Somertown joined the party, and the Duke's attention to Fanny, was not lost upon that cynical nobleman. "The boy is a fool," said he mentally, "and ready to fall in love with every school girl he meets with. A few hours ago he was dying for Miss Stanhope, and now the ideot is worshipping a new divinity ; but I know *boys* too well to notice their folly. Opposition only gives fire to romantic love, the spark will go out of itself, if the breath of contradiction does not fan it into flames."

The next day the Duke of Albermarle paid Miss Stanhope an early

visit. "What an amiable creature are you, my dear Madam," said he, "in shewing such compassion to me. Had you left me in ignorance on this trying occasion, my sufferings would have been insupportable."

"It is plain you think me very *amiable*," replied Amelia, laughing, "when you confess so candidly to my face, that the bare idea of being united to me, would have been insupportable to you. But if Jove forgive the *perjuries* of lovers, surely mere mortals may pardon their *rude-ness*."

"Nay," interrupted the Duke, "you wrong me, Madam, and wrest my words from their real meaning. I did not say the idea of marrying you would be insupportable, it was my *suspence* respecting the object of my choice, that I exclaimed against, and as that choice, as sudden as it is

ardent, was made before I had ever looked at you, surely the shadow of offence cannot be imputed to me."

"Tolerably well turned," answered Miss Stanhope, "but tell me, my lord, candidly, supposing all that I have told you should be proved a mere fabrication of my own brain, how would you be inclined to act? Would you play Mark Anthony, or Shylock? Would you throw away the world for love, or insist upon your '*bond*?' "

The Duke started—he did not like the suggestion, it gave rise to doubts that had not before tormented him, and he knew not what to answer. Amelia saw his confusion, and enjoyed it.

"I'll tell you what," said she, "I am afraid you are too luke-warm a lover for Amelia Stanhope; she is romance personified; and the man

who would not run away with her, at the risk of never possessing a shilling of her fortune, will never marry her you may depend upon it."

"The man who could think of *fortune*, when put in competition with the possession of *Miss Stanhope*, would be unworthy such a prize!" said the Duke, "but why, dear Madam, torment me with queries that involve even your own veracity as well as my happiness in clouds of obscurity?"

"I don't know why I started the difficulty," said *Miss Stanhope*, laughing, "unless it were meant to increase your passion, for say what you will, there is no stimulus in love equal to difficulty."

"There is a charm in your mischief-loving spirit, that would be dangerous to contemplate," said the Duke, "to a man less a captive than

I am. The witchery of your smiles is increased by the mischief that seems to lurk beneath them, and those you most delight to torment, would be most likely to feel *pleasure* from the infliction."

"Don't waste your time in complimenting *me*," said Amelia, laughing, "for betide what will, from *me* you can have no expectations. Had I not been quite *clear* upon that head I would not have undertaken the part I am playing."

"If then you are so clear as to what I may hope for from yourself," said the Duke, "deign, dear madam, to inform me what are my dependencies with your *friend*?"

"There are few women who can answer for *themselves*," said Amelia, "and you are unreasonable enough to expect that I should *answer* for my *friend*. I do not give so wide a

latitude to the duties of friendship. Thus far I will venture to tell you, if you win Amelia Stanhope, you must possess more merit than is at this moment apparent to your humble servant. ‘Exert *your energies*,’ therefore, my lord Duke, and who knows what may happen?’

“Provoking tantalizing girl!” said the Duke, in a tone of impatience, “how can you make an amusement of my sufferings, and laugh at my distress. Surely such softness of feature was never intended to enshrine a heart so impervious to humanity?”

“A pretty story, truly,” exclaimed Amelia, “that I am to be stigmatized with the appellation of *barbarian*, because I do not melt forsooth into sympathetic tears of pity, at the unheard-of sufferings of a man who having been *eight-and-forty* hours in

love, is still uncertain whether his mistress approves of him or not!!! Thank Heaven my sensibility does not keep pace with your impetuosity, if it did, my poor nerves would be in a lamentable situation indeed!"

The Duke could not help smiling, at the ludicrous turn Amelia gave to his complaints, though he little imagined the full extent of the irony she addressed to him.

"To be serious for a moment, if that indeed be possible," said the Duke, "will my fair instructress condescend to tell me what I am to say to my uncle when he questions me as to my reception by Miss Stanhope. Am I to report a *gracious* hearing or not?"

"Nay, I leave that to your own discretion," replied Amelia, "I am the *ostensible* Miss Stanhope, and I

am sure I have received you very kindly ; therefore you may safely say so. But I would advise you to throw in a few hints, when you are talking to your uncle, how much you would prefer the *portionless Fanny*, to the rich heiress, provided you could follow your own inclinations.

“ Lord Somertown will *pretend to reprove* your imprudence, but he will be secretly pleased with your penetration, and sound judgment, for he is as eager for the success of the romance as my friend, and quite as *deep* in the *plot*. Suffer all the preliminaries to be settled just as if you intended to marry Miss Stanhope in her proper character, and then to give zest to the joke, run away with her, a few days before the one fixed for your nuptials, under the fictitious name of *Fatherless Fanny*.

Oh the story will make the prettiest novel that ever was, and Amelia Stanhope will be better pleased with the *denouement* than any other person!"

"Would to Heaven I were sure of that!" said the Duke, "but the expression of her eyes does not speak so flattering a language."

"Nay, never mind that," replied Amelia, laughing, "for that may be as foreign from the truth as the rest of the plot. 'Faint heart never won a fair lady.' Go on, therefore, and prosper; you have *my* good wishes, and Miss Stanhope's 'too or I am mistaken'!"

## CHAPTER VII.

*The Concert.*

MISS STANHOPE, without disclosing a tittle of her plot to Fanny, managed it so well that she made her act in concert with her. The necessity of meeting the Duke continually was very irksome to Fanny; but Amelia laid her plans so adroitly that the former could not excuse herself from joining the parties of the latter, without giving the very reason she wished to conceal.

Instead of feeling flattered by the Duke's attentions, as she would have done had she considered herself en-

titled to receive his addresses, Fanny looked upon them as little short of insult, since the pointed manner in which they were paid her, left her no possibility of mistaking their import.

“To what end,” would she say to herself, “does the Duke of Albermarle address himself to *me*? Does he not know that I am acquainted with the nature of his engagements to Miss Stanhope? are they not publicly acknowledged to the world by the preparations that are making for their union? It is true that Amelia professes to dislike the Duke, nay, even affect to ridicule him; but she puts no barrier in the way of his addresses. He is received as her acknowledged lover; and though it is sufficiently evident that there is no love on either side, yet, if *convenience* be the motive of their union, it will

be nevertheless a *marriage*, and therefore renders his addresses to any other woman a gross insult to her delicacy."

While these ideas were passing in Fanny's mind, the Duke, who supposed her a party in a plot to deceive him, and who exulted in the knowledge of that plot, persevered in paying her the most marked attention, still carefully adhering to Miss Stanhope's injunctions not to give a hint of his knowledge of the deception. The Duke, who joined to a person the most engaging, a perfection in the art of pleasing that might have rendered a less handsome man irresistible, was a general favourite with the ladies, and his attentions to Fanny were not observed without exciting considerable emotions of envy and malice. The *nameless Girl* was already obnoxious

to their hatred from the *éclat* of her beauty, and now they gave vent in the most unequivocal terms to their rancour and illnature. "It was a shame," they said, "that a girl like that should be suffered to rival a young lady of Miss Stanhope's consequence; and they wondered the Marquis of Petersfield and Lord Somertown would allow of such doings; they ought to interpose their authority and remove a person so unfit for the circles of fashion as Fanny certainly was."

These whispers reached Lord Somerton's ears; and as he had always felt the most decided aversion for poor Fanny, he determined to speak to Colonel Ross and Lady Maria on the subject, and try if nothing could be done to get rid of so dangerous a person before the mischief had gone too far. His Lordship recollect

with regret, that he had himself betrayed the secret to the Duke respecting his alliance with Miss Stanhope, at a moment when he had been led to imagine that his nephew was as anxious for the match as he was; and by this imprudence the Duke knew that there was no penalty attached to his derelection from the proposed marriage.

After all the pains Lord Somertown had taken, and the *guilt* he had incurred, to insure the title of Albemarle to his nephew, the bare idea of his ingratitude was distraction!— Should he marry the nameless portionless Girl that seemed now to engross all his attention, Lord Somertown felt that he should scarcely survive the event, since the hatred he felt for the innocent object of his nephew's affection was as violent as it was undeserved.

From the first moment he had seen the sweet girl, he had hated her; and the expression of his eyes had been so true to the feelings of his soul, that Fanny had felt a terror she could neither account for nor subdue, whenever she had found herself the object of his scrutiny.

The Duke of Albemarle had been in England now about two months, and it was daily expected that his Grace's nuptials would be shortly fixed with the rich Miss Stanhope, whilst the busy circle that reported these conjectures never failed to add that "*the divine friendship*" that subsisted between Amelia and Fanny, would be a source of *much pleasure* to the *Duke*, whenever the union took place; and as, no doubt, *all* parties were *agreed*, it might prove a happy *compact*.

The only persons who heard no-

thing of these whispers, were those most concerned in their import,—namely, the *trio* themselves. That they were the objects of particular observation they could not fail of being conscious; but this they attributed to the celebrity of Miss Stanhope's fortune and approaching nuptials.

At a concert, one evening, however, the buzz was more than usually active; and Fanny, who was more particularly the object of illnatured observation, felt the painful impression of the whisper in circulation. Her nature delicate and modest, shrank from the general stare, and sufferings the most exquisite was painted on her intelligent countenance.

Not so Miss Stanhope; she, with her accustomed liveliness, was listening to the nonsense of Sir Everard

Mornington, a young man of dashing celebrity, who, besides being a member of the Four-in-Hand Club, was the epitome of every thing ridiculous in the long list of fashionable folly. His fortune was large, and his person handsome, and therefore even those people who had sense enough to laugh at his foibles, pretended to tolerate them in consideration of his extreme goodnature and generosity. In Miss Stanhope's eyes, however, he rose above toleration, for she doated upon eccentricity, and her ear was charmed by the frequent repetitions of those *elegant* phrases *prime* and *bang-up*, and the rest of that unintelligible *slang* which has lately been substituted for good sense and good breeding. The relation of his exploits in the Olympic art of charioteering, was more interesting to her feelings than she could pos-

sibly have found the annals of the most distinguished conquerors. Sir Everard was not insensible to the honour of Miss Stanhope's approbation ; and from the first evening of their acquaintance, he had determined that she alone, of all the girls he knew, black, brown, or fair, should sit beside him on the *dickey*, when he drove to the Temple of Hymen. The *slight* difficulty of a *prior engagement* was nothing to his magnanimous soul. “ There was but little merit,” he said, “ in winning a race where all the competitors started fair ; but to overtake and *overturn* a seemingly successful rival, would be *prime* and *bang-up* with a vengeance ! ”

The Duke had been conversing with Fanny, at the beginning of the entertainment, and paying her those thousand delicate and nameless at-

tentions which mark so well the affection of the heart. Fanny had received them, as she always did, with the most frigid coldness. When a delicate mind feels it necessary to struggle with a growing partiality for an object every way calculated to render the task difficult, the effort is made with all the fervor of determined virtue, and no outward symptom betrays the struggle within. The Duke felt piqued at her indifference, and began to doubt whether he had not been deceived by his informer, when he was taught to suppose she had cherished a wish to enslave him.

Full of these thoughts he had quitted Fanny's side, and wandered to the opposite side of the room.

Lady Maria Ross, who sat on the other side of Fanny, was engaged in deep conversation with some ladies

near her, and the poor girl was left exposed to the whispers and the observations of the surrounding ladies, as we just now related, a situation of whose disagreeables she was by no means insensible.

Absorbed in her own unpleasant reflections, she did not observe that a gentleman had taken the seat next her, which the Duke had just left, until his voice addressing her roused her from her reverie.

“Once more,” said he, in a tone which Fanny instantly knew to be the voice of the stranger whose politeness had rescued her from insult, in the Park, on the morning of her well remembered walk; “once more I am so happy as to meet with the sweet girl whose image has lived in my heart ever since the first moment I beheld her.” “Yet mistake me not, gentle lady,” continued he,

speaking more softly, "I am no lover come to offer the incense of flattery at the shrine of beauty. That passion is for ever extinct in this bosom: it is buried in the tomb of her you resemble. The offering I bring you is friendship the most sublime; such love as guardian angels feel for those they watch over. Deign then to listen to my warning voice—' Temptation, and danger, nay, even death itself, appear to threaten you ;' refuse not then the friend that Heaven itself has sent."

It is impossible to describe the variety of emotions that filled the bosom of Fanny as she listened to this strange address. The most predominant was fear: terrified at perceiving that she was observed more than ever, her first impulse was to fly; and she was rising from her seat, unconscious of the action, when she felt the stran-

ger's hand laid upon her arm to prevent her removal, and she mechanically re-seated herself.

" You seem to fear observation," said he, in a gentle voice, " and yet you were about to excite it in the most imprudent manner. Sit still, sweet girl, and be not afraid of the only friend this room contains for you." —

There was a charm in the voice of the stranger that had a powerful effect upon the heart of Fanny ; she had felt it the first time he spoke to her, and it seemed to increase rather than diminish in the repetition.

She raised her timid eyes to his face, and wondered at the delight that thrilled through her frame, as she read affection in those of the persuasive speaker. She immediately checked the emotion and endeavored to recover her serenity, but she could

only *look* composed ; the feelings of her mind were not to be subdued. The penetrating eye of the stranger perceived the struggle, and again addressed her.

“ I am impelled towards you, lovely girl,” said he, “ by an interest as undefinable as it is irresistible. I observe with pleasure that you participate in my feelings, although the sympathy is involuntary. The instinct of the soul is incapable of error ; I am persuaded, therefore, that we shall one day be satisfied why we experience the emotions that now agitate us both.”

Fanny continued silent during the whole of this address ; for she feared to trust her voice, lest its tremulous sound should betray her agitation. She did not feel so well assured that it was the effect of divine inspiration,

and therefore chose rather to check than encourage it.

She had been combating with the rising partiality that had been awakened in her bosom by the Duke of Albemarle, and she could not help feeling both surprised and provoked that a person, of whose very name she was ignorant, and whom she had seen but once before, should be able to excite sentiments of tenderness in her heart, far superior to any she had ever before experienced, and which, although they bore no resemblance to the partiality she felt for the Duke, were so new and indefinable, that she trembled to admit them.

“I perceive,” said the stranger, observing that Fanny’s reverie was both deep and painful, “I perceive that the abruptness of my address has alarmed your delicacy; but fear

not, sweet girl, I repeat, *I am no lover* ; consider me as a monitor and friend, and listen to my admonitions : You are surrounded by treachery ; beware of the Duke of Albemarle ; beware of Colonel Ross : but, above all, beware of Lord Somertown."

Fanny turned pale. "Good Heaven!" exclaimed she, "what danger threatens me? The people of whom you warn me are *nothing* to me. Why then should I fear them? Explain your mysterious caution, I implore you ; for it terrifies without instructing me."

"Explanation *here* is impossible," replied the stranger, "but meet me in the Park, where I first saw you, to-morrow morning, and I will reveal the mystery that perplexes you."

"Meet a stranger by appointment," said Fanny, colouring with indignation, "it is *you*, Sir, I ought to

*fear, who advise me so imprudently;*" and rising from her seat as she spoke, she quitted the side of the stranger, and immediately joined Miss Stanhope, who had just beckoned her to come to her. "You are a pretty Miss, indeed," said she, laughing as Fanny approached her, "two conquests in an evening is too much. "How *two* conquests," repeated Fanny, I do not understand you? "Oh! I will enlighten your understanding my dear—you have been first flirting with the Duke of Albemarle, and now I have caught you coqueting with the rich Mr. Hamilton."

"Mr. Hamilton!" said Fanny, "Is the gentleman who has just been talking to me named Hamilton? Yes! my dear, do you like the name better than Albemarle?"

"Oh, no!" said Fanny, *naively*,

"I only repeated the name because the house Lady Ellincourt purchased, in Yorkshire, belonged to a Mr. Hamilton, and I have always had my own thoughts about that house."

"Well, and now I suppose you will have *your own* thoughts about its late master," said Miss Stanhope, "for that gentleman in black is he. The late Mr. Hamilton left his immense fortune to him, on the condition of taking his name;—he met with him abroad, and took a fancy to him for some of the winning ways that seem to have charmed you, for I hear he was no relation to him. There's a history for you my dear, so now let's have your part of the romance, has he been making love to you? he looked mighty *sweet* methinks."

"No, indeed!" said Fanny, "he has not been making love to me; but do

you know he is the stranger I met with in Hyde Park, that morning when Colonel Ross was so angry with me; and he is the person the Colonel said was a *swindler*.

“ Charming, charming!” rejoined Miss Stanhope, “ the plot thickens. Well! my dear, I like the story vastly, and you shall marry which you like, the Duke or Mr. Hamilton.”

“ It is ridiculous to talk of my marrying either,” replied Fanny, in a tone of vexation.

“ It is not so ridiculous as you may chuse to think it,” interrupted Miss Stanhope, “ for I have the most unquestionable authority for asserting that the Duke of Albermarle is in love with you.”

Amelia raised her voice a little as she pronounced the latter part of her speech, and Lord Somertown’s ear caught the important information

it conveyed, as he was approaching in order to speak to her. It was enough to rouse all the demon within him, and turning upon his heel, he sought for Colonel Ross, to whom he merely said, that "he wished for a private conference with him the next morning, on a subject of importance, and begged to know whether he would do him the honor of receiving him to breakfast with him."

The Colonel said, "he was disengaged, and would certainly expect his Lordship at the hour appointed." Lord Somertown bowed, and immediately quitted Colonel Ross for the purpose of more strictly observing Fanny.

The result of this observation was not pleasing to him, for he had soon the pain of seeing the Duke of Albermarle resume his place beside

her, and Lord Somertown had been too long an inhabitant of the world to remain any longer ignorant of his nephew's sentiments respecting her.

Fury flashed from his eye as conviction shot through his heart, and the emotion was so strong, that the following words escaped his clinched teeth, as his terrible glance fell upon the object of his hatred:—Base worm! thou shalt perish for daring to oppose my wishes.

His rage was changed to horror, however, when a voice, close to his ear exclaimed in an awful tone—“Thou too art *perishable* frail mortal! thy power is limited, thy days are numbered—beware then how thou threatenest another! an eye observes thee that thou dreamest not of.”

A cold shiver ran through Lord Somertown's frame, as he listened

to accents too well remembered ; scarcely did he dare to turn his head, lest he should behold the face the voice had too fatally recalled. But curiosity is an impulse more powerful than fear itself. Agitated, as he was, with horror and dismay, he could not resist the eager dictates of that arbitrary power, and his eye involuntarily sought the person who had uttered the terrific words ; it caught a glimpse of his retiring form, and, as if blasted by the view, instantly closed, his limbs stiffened, and he fell on the ground ; the surrounding company were terrified at this catastrophe, though unconscious of its cause. Lord Somertown was raised from the ground and conveyed into an adjoining apartment, medical assistance sent for, and an *apoplectic fit* was the name given to the visitation of *remorse*.

The confusion this accident occasioned put an end to the concert. The company hastily called for their carriages and retired; all except those immediately connected with his Lordship. They staid and witnessed his recovery from the stupor into which an accusing conscience had plunged him; they saw his wildly staring eyes, as he cast them around the room in search of the spectre that had alarmed him; and listened with horror to his incoherent allusions to scences of former guilt and cruelty.

The Duke of Albermarle, however, finding that his uncle uttered expressions that too plainly told that all was not right within, proposed his being removed to his own house, and, as the physician pronounced that it might be done with safety, his Lordship was supported to his

carriage in the arms of his servants; and by that conveyed to where he was put to bed. His pillow, swelling with down, received his aching head; the rich drapery that hung round his bed shaded his dim eyes from the tapers that burnt on his table; and busy attendants crowded around him to prevent his wishes.

But, alas! repose was not to be found within the sumptuous apartment—no down could administer the sweets of rest to a disturbed conscience; and although the silken hangings might exclude the blaze of waxen tapers, they could not shelter the *mind's eye* from the bright flaine of *conviction* that awakened busy memory, and bid her inflict tortures which could neither be borne nor *eluded*. The ready domestic, however, willing to anticipate his Lord's wishes could not present him with

the *only* cordial his fevered lip pouted for—the water of oblivion, whose friendly powers might teach him to forget his guilt, and thereby escape the remorse that harrowed up his soul, and filled him with unutterable anguish.

## CHAPTER VIII.

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*A Morning Visit.*

ALAS ! why does not remorse induce repentance ? Too often we find it has a contray effect, stirring up in the soul poisoned by guilt, sentiments of fury and revenge instead of contrition and amendment. Lord Somertown was torn by the recollection of the deeds of cruelty and injustice he had been guilty of; yet, instead of wishing to atone for his guilt, or making restitution to the injured parties as far as circumstances would admit of, his malicious spirit panted to commit more outrages,

and, although struggling as it were in the grasp of death, he seemed to wish a prolongation of his life merely to use it for the destruction of others.

His ear had convinced him that a being still existed of whose death he had long thought himself certain; and the tempest of passions that conviction awakened in his soul gave energy to his debilitated frame, and roused him from the lethargy into which terror had plunged him, when first the surprise assailed him.

“*I will live,*” said the furious Earl, raising himself in his bed, with an energy that astonished his attendants, “*I will live, for I have much to accomplish before I die.*”

Supported by the fervor which had seized his mind, Lord Somertown was able to keep his appointment, the ensuing morning, with Colonel

Ross, who felt a surprise bordering on incredulity when the man he had thought dying, the preceding evening, was introduced into his library, and he beheld his erect carriage and ardent eye, in neither of which remained a single vestige of indisposition.

“I feel both rejoiced and astonished,” exclaimed the Colonel, as he placed his noble visitor in an arm chair, “to see your Lordship so wonderfully recovered from the illness that alarmed us all so greatly last night.”

“Weak minds,” replied his Lordship, “are apt to yield to the slightest stroke of sickness, but mine is not cast in that mould, Colonel. The business which has brought me hither is important to the *dignity* of my family, and forcible indeed must have been that power which could

have tempted me to defer it. Your high character for politeness Colonel, induces me to hope that you will give me the information I require, and, perhaps subsequent circumstances may induce you to lend your assistance to the forwarding of my views in an affair of much moment."

The Colonel bowed, and Lord Somertown proceeded—You have a *girl* under your care who is a perfect enigma; would you, Sir, inform me who she really is?

"That is not in my power my Lord," replied Colonel Ross, "my ignorance on that subject is as profound as your Lordship's."

"Astonishing!" rejoined Lord Somertown: "Is not Lady Maria better informed?"

"I assure your Lordship with truth," said the Colonel, "that neither Maria nor myself know the

least tittle concerning the person you allude to, excepting that she is a foundling, and is called *Fanny*. She has no surname, nor do I believe the poor girl is any wiser on this subject than ourselves."

"If it be not impertinent," said Lord Somertown, "may I ask what motive could induce people of rank, like Colonel Ross and Lady Maria, to make a person, so obscure, the inmate of their house, and to introduce her in parties where her doubtful origin must be a source of pain to herself, and resentment to those who feel their dignity insulted by having such a person obtruded upon them. But, perhaps, the romantic spirit of these novel-reading times suggested the probability that the girl might be some Princess in disguise, fled from her persecutors to

take refuge in this land of benevolence and philanthropy.

“Indeed!” replied Colonel Ross, “we never gave ourselves the trouble of conjecturing who the girl might be, but merely took her under our care at the request of Lady Dowager Ellincourt, who is a relation and very intimate friend of my wife’s.”

“Lady Dowager Ellincourt!” repeated Lord Somertown, and his lip quivered with stifled rage. If she be an *élève* of Lady Ellincourt’s there is every thing to be expected from her which intrigue and artifice can accomplish. I mortally hate that woman!” continued his Lordship, knitting his brow, “and the babbling fool her son is even more intolerable than herself; but this has nothing to do with the business before us. Are you aware Colonel

of the mischief your mistaken condescension to this beggar's brat has occasioned?"

"No! my Lord," replied Colonel Ross, "I never yet supposed her of consequence enough to become the source of any mischief to any one; unless, indeed," added he, smiling, "the witchery of her beauty has enslaved your Lordship, the girl is certainly a lovely creature!"

Lord Somertown's eyes struck fire — "You do not mean to insult me Colonel, I hope," said he.

"Simple *bardinage*, I assure your Lordship;" replied the Colonel, laying his hand upon his heart. "But I beseech your Lordship to inform me what crime poor Fanny has committed?"

"In the first place, she has formed an intimacy with Miss Stanhope," replied Lord Somertown, "which I

deem an intolerable degradation to that young lady; and, in the next, acting with the consummate art which those low people generally possess, she has insinuated herself into the favour of my half-witted nephew, who, dazzled with the beauty you extolled so highly, and bewitched by the artful blandishments of the sorceress, fancies himself desperately in love with her; so much so, that forgetful of his engagements to Miss Stanhope, and the dignity of his own rank, he is at this moment planning a scheme to run away with and marry this young adventuress. I have this information from the most unquestionable authority, confirmed by my own observation."

Colonel Ross was thunder-struck when he heard Lord Somertown declare, that the Duke of Albermarle intended to *marry* Fanny. *He* had

observed the Duke's attentions to the object of his own designs, but an idea of marriage had never entered his imagination; the cold disdain which the countenance of Fanny uniformly displayed whenever the Duke addressed her, in company, had thrown Colonel Ross off his guard, and lulled his fears to sleep. He seemed now to awaken to a sudden sense of his danger, and his rage was little inferior to Lord Somertown's, as the conviction darted through his mind.

“ *Consummate hypocrite!*” exclaimed he, “ so young and so artful! the coolness with which she always appeared to treat the Duke made me believe his Grace's overtures were of a different nature.”

“ I rejoice,” said Lord Somertown, “ that Colonel Ross appears to see this affair in the same atrocious light

that I do. Nothing surely is so unpardonable as when a low person, like that girl, takes advantage of the kindness shewn her by persons of a superior rank, to steal into a noble family, and for ever tarnish the honor of it by so unequal a union. Good heavens! the Duke of Albermarle to marry a foundling! a girl without a name!

“ Horrid indeed!” exclaimed Col. Ross, whose objections to the union sprung from a very different cause to what Lord Somertown imagined.

“ Your feelings Colonel are so consonant to mine, upon this subject,” said his Lordship, “ that I flatter myself you will not refuse your aid in preventing so fatal a termination of my hopes as this ill-assorted marriage.”

“ Your Lordship may command me,” replied Colonel Ross, “ there-

is nothing that I would not do to prevent it.'

Lord Somertown shook the Colonel by the hand—"My good friend," said his Lordship, "this ready compliance exceeds my hopes. I will now lay aside all reserve, and you and I will presently understand each other I am sure."

Lord Somertown was right; Col. Ross was not one of the scrupulous sort when he had any self-gratification in view, and as Lord Somertown's proposals all appeared calculated to further his own wishes, he started no objection to the diabolical scheme his Lordship laid before him. What that scheme was, will appear hereafter, for the consultation was interrupted by the appearance of a servant, who announced the arrival of a visitor.

"Mr. Hamilton," said he, "re-

quests, the favor of a few minutes conference Sir," said the servant, bowing, he is waiting in the breakfast room."

"Hamilton! Hamilton!" repeated the Colonel, "I don't know him; why didn't you say I was engaged?"

"I did, Sir, but he would not be denied. He said he knew you were at home, because Lord Somertown's carriage was waiting at the door, and he heard his Lordship make an appointment with you at the concert last night."

"Oh," said the Colonel, "then it *must* be the rich Hamilton, for he was there last night, I was told; but I don't know him when I see him; so what he can want of me, I cannot conceive."

"Mr. Hamilton asked if Miss Fanny was at home, first," said the servant, "and when I told him she

was on a visit at the Marquis of Petersfield's, he gave his name, and desired to see you, Sir."—

"Very well," replied the Colonel; "tell Mr. Hamilton I will wait upon him immediately."

The servant withdrew.

"I think we may make some use of this circumstance," said Lord Somertown. "This is some lover of that artful girl's."

"Perhaps so, indeed," answered Colonel Ross, reddening, for he hated to hear of any lover for Fanny; "does your Lordship know Mr. Hamilton; he seems to know you?"

"That may be very possible," replied Lord Somertown, answering the Colonel's last observation, "many people know me, of whom I have not the most distant knowledge; this Hamilton is one of them. He may be a rich man, but he is cer-

tainly not a man of *consequence*, for I *never* heard of him before."

Lord Somertown now ordered his chariot, and taking leave of the Colonel, he said, "Remember your promise, and command me in what way you chuse."

"Your Lordship need not fear," answered his base associate, "I am too much interested in the event, to be lukewarm in the cause."

Lord Somertown nodded assent, and proceeded to his carriage. He readily believed the Colonel's assertion that he was *interested* in the event, because he had promised him a *borough*, for which honour he had long been sighing.

Colonel Ross was a deep politician, and a strong party man, there was enough, therefore, in the promise, to awaken his energy. But his Lordship knew not the most powerful

stimulus to the base action he had undertaken ; he knew not that urged by a brutal passion, which, according to the *jargon* of modern depravity, he dignified with the name of *love*, this pretended patriot was secretly rejoicing that an opportunity offered of uniting in the same cause his ambition and his inclination,

## CHAPTER IX.

*A Proposal.*

WHEN Colonel Ross entered the breakfast room he was struck with the noble appearance of the gentleman who was there waiting for him, and a faint recollection of having once seen him before, stole across his mind as he paid his compliments to him.

Mr. Hamilton appeared to be about forty years of age, or hardly so much, for there were traces of suffering on his countenance that seemed to tell a tale of sorrow rather than of years. His features were beauti-

ful, and the expression of high spirit that sparkled in his dark eye, was softened by the benevolence that mingled with its vivid rays; his brow was arched, and his nose a perfect aquiline. His mouth, too, was calculated to inspire his beholders with confidence; candour seemed to play upon his lips, and truth herself gave sanction to the sweet smile that adorned them. I have always thought *that* feature the most unerring index of the mind. Heaven has made it the organ by which we are intended to make our thoughts known to each other: and although the exalted gift is frequently perverted, the portals through which the speech must pass, remain faithful to the purpose of the heart that suggests it. Never did the smile of artful blandishment or constrained polite-

ness wear the guise of truth. The words that sound from the mouth may be false, but the curve that marks the lip at their departure is true to the feeling that is either expressed or disguised by their utterance."

It was impossible to find a face formed with more faultless grace than Mr. Hamilton's, it displayed the perfection of manly beauty, yet did the shades of a deep melancholy sit on his pensive brow, and cloud his eye with sadness ; but it was a melancholy that spoke of resignation and fortitude, awakening sympathy allied to respect, in the hearts of his beholders.

The dignity with which he returned Colonel Ross's compliments, seemed to be natural to him ; and the urbanity of his manners con-

vinced his host that he *must* be *noble* as well as rich, although Lord Somertown had pronounced him to be *nobody*, because not upon the list of his right honourable acquaintances.

It might, perhaps, be the nobility of *nature*, which is, it must be confessed, of more intrinsic value than that conferred by *hereditary* rank. Be that as it may, the Colonel felt so little doubt of his guest's claim to respect, that he began an elaborate apology for having kept him waiting so long.

“It is *I* who ought to apologize for my intrusion, Sir,” replied Mr. Hamilton, with a benignant smile; “but, I trust, when you know the motive that induced me to take such a liberty, that you will be inclined to forgive me for it.”

The Colonel bowed, and Mr. Hamilton proceeded:

"You have a young lady under your protection, Sir, for whom I feel an interest, it will be as difficult for me to describe, as I already find it to comprehend the cause of, unless, indeed, it be the resemblance she bears to a dear friend of mine long since numbered with the dead."

"Fanny has powerful attractions," said Colonel Ross, rather sarcastically, "and, I think, I can understand the sort of interest she has excited in your heart, Sir, without any far-fetched illustration of so common an event."

The blush of resentment mantled on Mr. Hamilton's cheek, as he listened to the Colonel's illiberal remark.

"Of Miss Fanny's attractions, excepting that powerful one of inno-

cent sweetness, that so peculiarly characterises her countenance, I can have a very superficial knowledge," said Mr. Hamilton, indignantly.— "Your suspicions, Sir, are premature. I am not come here in the character of a *lover*; it is a title I disclaim. My heart is for ever shut against the power of beauty; my passions are dead; and philanthropy is the last surviving feeling of my soul. Miss Fanny's features awakened the remembrance of a long lost friend, and she became immediately an object of inexpressible interest to me. I inquired who she was, and was informed that she is an orphan, and dependent on the bounty of strangers. Whether this tale be true or not, I cannot tell, and therefore came to solicit the favor from you, Sir, of farther particulars concerning the

young lady. If you will inform me what her name is, and to what family she is related, I shall consider myself greatly your debtor, and will endeavour to forget the too hasty judgment you formed of my intentions, which I now declare to be pure as parental kindness can dictate. This young lady pleases me ; she is poor and I am rich : I am alone in the world, without a single claim upon me for the inheritance of the immense fortune I enjoy ; what, therefore, *can* I do more likely to conduce to my own happiness, than to insure that of this child of misfortune, by . . . . ”

“ *Marrying* her, I suppose, Sir,” interrupted Colonel Ross, whose predilection in favour of Mr. Hamilton at his first entrance was now converted into jealous hatred.

"I am astonished," exclaimed Mr. Hamilton, "at your persisting in perverting my meaning, Sir. I tell you I am not a lover; and I beg you will attend to what I say, and endeavour to *believe* it."

"That would be an effort above me," replied the Colonel; "I must confess I am not so romantically given as very *easily* to believe, that a sober middle-aged gentleman, like yourself, Mr. Hamilton, whatever he may profess, would interest himself about a pretty girl, like the one under my protection, for the mere *philanthropic* gratification of disinterestedly providing for her. Under this impression, I am constrained to tell you, Sir, that your visits will be dispensed with at this house. . . . You confess that you have no intention of *marrying* Fanny; and as no

other overtures *can* be received by her guardians, all questions respecting her, from you, Sir, will be deemed impertinent."

As Colonel Ross spoke, he rose from his chair and pulled the bell: a servant appeared.

"Mr. Hamilton's carriage," said he.

Mr. Hamilton rose indignantly, and darting a look of contempt at the Colonel, "I have stooped," said he, "to ask as a favor, what, perhaps, I ought rather to have demanded, as the champion of oppressed innocence. I have marked you, Colonel Ross, and I warn you to beware what you do. We seldom suspect sinister designs in others, unless we have cherished them ourselves."

"The application is good, in your

own case, Sir," said the Colonel, and turned on his heel ; for there was a scrutiny in Mr. Hamilton's eye that disconcerted him.

Mr. Hamilton now withdrew ; and as he stepped into his chariot, he vowed to devote himself to the protection of the defenceless Fanny. Some hints that had reached his ear in the course of his inquiries respecting her, had awakened suspicions which were now confirmed by the Colonel's behaviour.

As soon as Mr. Hamilton was gone, Colonel Ross returned to his study, in order to think over without the probability of an interruption, the best means that could be devised to prevent Fanny from being informed of Mr. Hamilton's designs in her favour.

The Colonel did not entertain a

doubt that a marriage was her new friend's ultimate view, although in the beginning of the affair he chose to assume a more disinterested character. Of that benevolence that delights in making others happy, without one selfish view in the action, Colonel Ross knew nothing; the feelings of his heart, if he had any, they had been either stifled in their infancy or called forth only for selfish, sensual enjoyments.

He was the younger brother of an earl, and provided for by his father, as younger brothers generally are in noble families. The meanness allied to cunning, natural to his disposition, had early taught him to win upon his elder brother's heart, by the blandishment of adulation, and servile submission to his will. The artifice had succeeded, and Lord Ballafyn

had rewarded his complaisant brother with a commission, and a pretty estate, to support the dignity of the family, in addition to what his father had left him. His marriage with Lady Maria Trentham, had increased his fortune, as she had thirty thousand pounds more than her sisters, which had been bequeathed her by her maternal grandfather. But tell me when was the sordid mind satisfied?

Colonel Ross was avaricious and extremely proud: it was difficult to reconcile the opposite propensities of these feelings; as the demands of his pride were severe taxes upon his meanness. An opportunity now offered of gratifying *all* his evil tendencies, and he felt the impulse irresistible.

Should Mr. Hamilton's generous

intentions be made known respecting Fanny, it might prevent the execution of his scheme, and disappoint his hopes of realising both riches and power, by the very act that would give him the uninterrupted possession of the girl he had long secretly sighed for.

Colonel Ross had a head formed for intrigue; he was not therefore long in his deliberations, but decided with a promptitude for which he had often been praised by his partners in iniquity.

As soon as he saw his amiable lady, he informed her of Mr. Hamilton's visit, but disguised the motives of it, under the most daring falsehood. He represented that gentleman's application to himself as the nefarious trick of an abandoned seducer, who, pleased with the pretty

face of an innocent inexperienced girl, wished to ensnare her by a pretended show of friendship.

“ He did not dare to avow his diabolical designs,” said the Colonel, because he feared I should kick him out of my house ; but, after having offered to provide for the girl, out of the ample fortune he possesses, he had the effrontery to own, when pressed upon by my questions that he had no thoughts of marrying her.”—

“ Good Heavens !” exclaimed Lady Maria. “ Can it be possible that any one can be so depraved ? But how did you treat such a shocking breach of decency ?”

“ I was greatly incensed,” replied the Colonel, “ and, after forbidding him the house, I rang the bell, and called for his carriage.”

“ Charming,” said Lady Maria ; “ and what did he say to that ? ”

“ Oh, he sneaked off without resenting the affront I had offered him. But, my dear Maria, we must take double care of poor Fanny. I wish she had finished her visit at the Marquis of Petersfield’s. This is a dangerous fellow : he is certainly the handsomest man *I* ever saw, and extremely fascinating ; and although he is past the bloom of youth, he may be a formidable tempter to the inexperienced Fanny. I really think it would be wise to take her into the country, for a little while : should you have any objection to visiting Pemberton Abbey, for a few weeks ? ”

“ Oh, no ; I should like it of all things, if you think it necessary,” said Lady Maria.

“ It is necessary, you may be

sure," replied the Colonel. Hamilton will leave no artifice untried to entrap her, you may depend upon that ; and the poor girl will be lost before we are aware of his designs : but you must not let Fanny suppose we leave town on her account, or it is an hundred to one but it will make her unwilling to go."

"Indeed," said Lady Maria, "you are mistaken ; I am sure that reason would make her go more readily : you have now alarmed me so truly that I shall be as much on the watch as you are.

"Fanny is very beautiful ; and if such a man as Mr. Hamilton can form such designs against her, what has she not to fear from those of less sober habits, who openly profess to admire her ?"

"It is impossible to calculate," said the Colonel ;" and therefore the sooner she goes into the country the better."

CHAPTER IX.

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*Tête-à-tête.*

WHEN Lady Maria met Fanny in the course of that day, she mentioned the circumstance of Mr. Hamilton's visit and her own, and Colonel Ross's alarm upon the subject, adding that it was their decided opinion that her safety depended upon her immediate removal into the country. "I will accompany you, Fanny," said the good-natured but weak-minded Lady Maria, "for surely you cannot object to go." "I have not the least objection to leaving town,"

said Fanny laughing, “ but really cannot see any necessity for so doing on Mr. Hamilton’s account ; I am sure were I to consult my own inclination, he is one of the last people I should wish to fly from : there is something so fascinating in his manner, that I feel to love without knowing him, his voice is persuasion itself, I could listen to it for ever”

“ Upon my honor, you astonish and frighten me,” said Lady Maria, “ this must be a most dangerous man indeed. Why, my dear Fanny, you have seen him only once and he has absolutely turned your head.”

“ I beg your Ladyship’s pardon,” replied Fanny, “ I have seen Mr. Hamilton twice, for he is the very gentleman who rescued me from the impertinence of the man in Hyde Park. I recollect his voice the

instant he spoke last night, it seemed to thrill through my very heart.

“ It could not be the same person, ‘ my dear,’ ” answered Lady Maria, or Colonel Ross would have remembered him, for you know he saw him.” “ I know he did,” rejoined Fanny, “ but perhaps he did not make such a strong impression upon the Colonel’s memory as he did upon mine—it is *impossible* that *I* should *ever* forget him.”

“ Well, upon my honor, Fanny, you talk so strangely, I cannot tell what to make of you; to fall in love with a stranger, and then speak about it as unconcerned as if there were nothing in it, is so unlike your natural character, that I really do not know my friend Fanny in the picture.”

“ I know very little about *love*, ”

replied Fanny, *naively*, “ but I do not think what I feel for Mr. Hamilton is what is generally understood by the term *falling in love*, I cannot be said to love a person that I do not know. I am unacquainted with a single virtue that may adorn Mr. Hamilton ; I am equally ignorant whether his character is not tarnished by some vice that would disgust me were it known to me. Esteem is therefore impossible, and love in my heart cannot exist without it ; yet am I irresistibly drawn as it were by a secret instinct which I can neither account for, nor describe, to feel interested for this gentleman beyond what I ever before experienced for any mortal.”

“ Depend upon it, my dear,” said Lady Maria, “ this man has used some unfair means to engage your

affections. I have heard there are *charms* that will take such effect as to render it impossible to escape their witchcraft, and your description of your unaccountable partiality for Mr. Hamilton convinces me that you are under the influence of some demoniac conjuration.

“ Surely, my dear Lady Maria,” said Fanny, “ you cannot be weak enough to believe in witchcraft ? I cannot help laughing at such a preposterous idea.”

“ You may laugh, if you please,” answered Lady Maria, “ but I shall lose no time in taking you out of town. I vow I shall expect to see you carried away in a whirlwind or conveyed up the chimney if you remain within the circle of this vile necromancer any longer.”

“ Nay, my dear friend,” replied

Fanny, " if such be indeed your creed, a removal into the country will avail me but little, a genie so powerful can surely find me in the most sequestered retreat ; I am nevertheless ready to accompany your Ladyship at the shortest notice."

When Miss Stanhope was informed of Lady Maria's sudden determination to quit London, and take Fanny with her, she expressed the most violent discontent ; it was impossible any longer to carry on the cheat that had hitherto *puzzled* the Duke, for he had more than once entertained doubts as to the perfect truth of the story which he had at first implicitly believed.

" What can be the meaning of this unaccountable whim," said that young lady to Fanny, " is Lady Maria light-headed, or has the

Colonel some intrigue upon his hands that he cannot carry on so well while his wife is in town? For I imagine *he* is not to make one it this Quixote expedition."

"I really do not know," answered Fanny, "for nothing has been explained to me excepting what I have told you, that Colonel Ross has taken it in his head that Mr. Hamilton is a conjuror, and that I shall be conveyed to some enchanted castle by a touch of his wand, unless I am immediately removed into the country; Lady Maria is a convert of the same opinion, and the result is, I *must* go into the country."

"Well, my dear," answered Miss Stanhope, "if I were you I would please these two fools; I *would* go into the country, but it should not be where they please, but where I

liked myself; I will explain myself more fully this evening if you will come into my dressing room as soon as we leave the dining-parlour. It will be your own fault if you do not shew them that you understood *conjuration* as well as they, and know how to get into an enchanted castle without the assistance of Mr. Hamilton."

Fanny looked surprised---"What do you mean Amelia?" said she.

"A riddle you cannot comprehend yet," replied Miss Stanhope, "but I tell you it shall be explained to you in the evening; one thing however I will tell you. On the accomplishment of the scheme comprised in that riddle depends my future happiness."

Fanny in vain entreated Miss Stanhope to explain herself more fully: she would not do it.

“Where is it they are going to take you to Fanny,” said she, not noticing the questions which had just been asked her.

“Into Yorkshire,” replied her friend, “Lady Ellencourt gave Colonel Ross and Lady Maria permission to make use of her seat there whenever they found it agreeable; and I assure you I shall feel great pleasure in revisiting a place where I have spent so many happy days.”

“Why, Pemberton Abbey is an odd place to take you to, if they are afraid of Mr. Hamilton. He has a large estate that joins Lady Ellen-court’s, which, you know, together with the mansion, was purchased of the gentleman who left the fortune to the *Conjuror*, as your wise ones call Mr. Hamilton. Apropos, you say he was your champion in Hyde-

Park when you were attacked by the Dragon of Wantley. Do you think him handsome?"

"The handsomest man I ever saw," answered Fanny.

"Hush, my dear; you forget you have seen the Duke of Albemarle. You surely do not think Mr. Hamilton to be compared with the Duke."

"I don't expect *you* should think so," replied Fanny; "but you may allow me to prefer Mr. Hamilton to the Duke."

"Prefer him! Why, certainly, you do not like Mr. Hamilton best. I shall believe in the conjuration scheme, if you say yes;" interrupted Miss Stanhope.

"Nay, as to *liking* either," answered Fanny, "I am not well enough acquainted with them to

warrant such an expression ; but I certainly know which interests me most."

" And pray let us hear who that happy creature is," said Amelia.

" Mr. Hamilton, beyond all comparison," rejoined Fanny ; " and yet I know not why it is so."

" Sorcery and witchcraft !" exclaimed Amelia. " Lady Maria is right !

" Why my dear he is an old man compared to you. For Heaven's sake don't fall in love with an *old* man.

" I am not in love," answered Fanny, pettishly ; " I hate that word. I tell you, Amelia, I would not marry Mr. Hamilton, if he were the Emperor of the world."

" Marry him, indeed ! No, I hope you would not think of marrying a

man who is old enough to be your father."

"My father!" ejaculated Fanny. "Sweet words! How does my orphan heart pant to hail that honored name! Oh, that I had a father! That Mr. Hamilton were my father!"

"Now that's a good girl," said Miss Stanhope.

"That's an excellent thought. I dare say Mr. Hamilton *is* your father; and that accounts for the wonderful sympathy between you. You are a foundling, you know."

"But Mr. Hamilton is a Creole, is he not?" said Fanny, who caught eagerly at the suggestion so lightly made by her giddy friend.

"Mr. Hamilton is a Creole, and never was in England till now?"

"Oh, never mind that," rejoined

Amelia, "inconsistencies are nothing in a *novel*. You were sent over in a *hamper* to be educated in England; and then he forgot to inquire where they had placed you, and so you come to be lost."

Fanny's countenance fell, when she perceived, by this speech, that Miss Stanhope had no serious idea of the probability she had suggested. "Alas!" thought she, "Amelia is surrounded by affluence, and feels not, as I do, the mortifying circumstances of dependance. She is an orphan, but not an indigent one. It is not, however, Mr. Hamilton's riches I sigh for; the sacred title of father, would be equally dear to my heart, were it accompanied by poverty. To be hailed by the endearing name of child; to be pressed to the paternal bosom of a virtuous pa-

rent, and find within the circle of a father's arms, a safe asylum from the persecutions of a cruel world. This is what I wish for ; and gladly would I embrace obscurity and indigence, were those the terms on which alone I could obtain that fondly wished for blessing!"

"I dare say it would be mighty *pathetic*," said Amelia, "if one could read all that is passing in that serious *head*, just now. But cheer up, child ; the naughty conjurors shall not have you ; nor the anti-conjurors either ; for I mean to dispose of you myself, in the prettiest way imaginable. Your romantic story shall have such a charming termination, that all the booksellers shall be giving it to the novel-writers for a subject. I intend writing a poem upon it myself. I shall chuse Scott's style ; that irre-

gular metre will suit my whimsical fancy exactly."

"It is a happy thing," said Fanny with a sigh, "that you have got *me* for a *butt*."

"Nay, my dear," said Miss Stanhope, "it will be *your* turn soon; and then if you don't make a butt of me it will be your own fault. But there is the first bell; make haste to your toilet; and if you are not of Thompson's opinion on the subject of unadorned beauty, make yourself as *killing* as possible. Your good looks will not be wasted."

"Who is coming to dine here?" asked Fanny.

"Several gentlemen, and *perhaps* Mr. Hamilton."

"Pho!" cried Fanny, "you only say that to teize *me*."

"Upon my honor I should not be

surprised if he were," replied Miss Stanhope; " for I heard Lord Cheviotdale praising Mr. Hamilton to the Marquis;" and the latter said, he would get acquainted with him; and should that be the case, I will ask him to give you away when you are married, and then he *will* be your father."

"Giddy girl!" exclaimed Fanny as she left the room.

"Will there ever come a time that you will be serious?"

"Oh, yes, my dear; when I am *married*."

## CHAPTER XI.

*A Dilemma.*

WHEN Fanny entered the dining-parlour, the company were just seating themselves; for her long conversation with Amelia had made her too late at her toilet.

The Duke of Albemarle took her hand as she approached the table, and led her to the chair next Miss Stanhope's, and immediately seated himself beside her.

"Your lovely friend," said his Grace, addressing Fanny in a low voice, "has given me permission to

assume the character of your *Ci-cesbeo*. Tell me, Madam, has that grant your sanction?"

"It is an honor to which I am by no means entitled," replied Fanny blushing excessively.

"It will confer an honor upon me," rejoined the Duke, "more highly valued than any other *can be*. Say then, lovely Miss *Stanhope*, that you do not forbid the presumption."

"Your Grace mistakes the person you are speaking to," replied Fanny, "and you render my situation distressing beyond expression."

"Heaven forbid," exclaimed the Duke, "I will be silent *now*; but the moment approaches which must dissipate this cloud of error."

The whole of this conversation had passed in a whisper, and unheard by the surrounding guests; but the

Duke's marked attention to Fanny, had not passed unnoticed by several ladies who sat near the Marchioness, and who observed, 'that it really was too bad to begin *flirting before* marriage, close to his bride's elbow too. But, no doubt, the *forwardness* of the *girl* was the cause of such *strange behaviour.*' Poor Fanny, in the mean time, sat the very picture of confusion and embarrassment, totally at a loss to understand the Duke's enigmatical address to her.

She waited the moment of withdrawing from table, with an impatience so painfully exquisite, that she could not command presence of mind enough to reply collectively to the little nothings which were said to her by the ephemera about her.

Miss Stanhope, with her usual giddiness, enjoyed her confusion, and

added considerably to it, by remarking to the Duke, 'that she really believed he was an arrant thief.'

"*A thief!*" re-echoed his Grace; "pray ma'am explain yourself."

"Nay, appearances are strong against your Grace, I assure you. Fanny was in full possession of all her faculties about ten minutes before she entered this room, and it is plain she has lost her recollection, and the use of her tongue, since she sat by you; what, therefore, can be inferred, but that *you* have stolen them?"

Before the Duke could reply to this mad speech, the Marchioness rose to quit the table, and Fanny was released from her uncomfortable situation.

On retiring to the drawing-room, Miss Stanhope reminded Fanny of her engagement.

"Come," said she, offering her arm, "you know we are to have an explanation. I thought you would be dying for it. I did not expect to be obliged to remind you of it."

"Indeed," replied Fanny, "you talk to me in such a wild strain, that I place no confidence in any thing you say."

"Thank you my dear, you are vastly polite I must confess, nevertheless I excuse you because, I can feel for you just now; there does appear a mystery certainly."

By this time they had reached Miss Stanhope's dressing-room, which had been fitted up for the reception of her morning visitors and was an elegant apartment on the first floor, with folding doors that opened upon a terrace in the gardens of Petersfield House. The weather

being warm, these doors were thrown open, and Amelia seated herself upon a sofa that stood on the outside, and placing Fanny beside her, began her promised explanation in the following words :

“ I know not,” said she, “ what you will say to me for the prank I have played you, but as I lose a lover, and you gain a coronet by it, I think you have not much cause to be angry. In the first place then I must tell you that I never could endure the idea of marrying the Duke of Albermarle from the first time I ever heard the alliance talked of, and that is as long ago as I can remember any thing. An antipathy so deeply rooted, and of such long standing, is not easily conquered, and I have always been beating my brains to imagine some quaint device to get

rid of the match, and yet preserve my fortune, which I had always been told must be the forfeit of my refusal of the Duke's hand. My imagination was not however sufficiently fertile to supply any scheme that appeared practicable until the lucky hour in which your accident introduced you to my intended husband ; he saw and admired you, and I was sufficiently clear-sighted to penetrate the secret in an instant and with the ability of a skilful general, I lost no time in arranging my plan of attack, and so scientifically did I manœuvre, that I made you both prisoners without your even suspecting an ambush ; I should feel more vain of my skill in tactics if it were not for this one recollection. I believe my wits had been sharpened a little while before,

by a discovery that made prompt measures indispensable. I had found out that I not only detested the idea of marrying the Duke, but that there was a being in existence, for whom I felt no such antipathy, and whose wife I had rather be, than the empress of the modern Alexander himself ; my fortune was now become of greater value in my eyes, because I thought it would be acceptable to the man of my choice, and I determined if possible to make the Duke the transgressor, and thus insure the possession of it to him.

The scheme succeeded beyond my expectations more, I believe, owing to the love-sick blindness of the Duke than any great ingenuity of mine. I know the world well enough, inexperienced as I am, to feel sure that my fortune and the engagement

that seemed to exist between the Duke of Albemarle and myself, would act as powerful checks to the encouragement of a mere romantic passion conceived in the warmth of youthful effervescence that the Duke should admire you; nay, absolutely love you, I knew to be both possible and even likely to happen, but that he should fly in the face of prudence, and determine to fight the Giant of Grumbo his uncle, to obtain you, I thought rather to be wished than attained, I therefore laid a trap for his prudence, and baited it with a savory scrap of plausibility, and had soon the unspeakable satisfaction of seeing my silly mouse caught, beyond the possibility of escape. I made up a serious face, the first time we met after the accident, and assured him with great

shew of truth that *you* were Miss Stanhope; and that you had prevailed upon me to assume your name and character under the romantic hope of obtaining his Grace's affections for the sake of pure merit and disinterested love; I added, that Lord Somertown was a party in the trick and that nothing would please his uncle so well as to see him take notice of the real heiress, in her disguise, although his outward carriage would imply resentment. Perhaps had the Duke been less enamoured, he would have been more clear-sighted; be that as it may, he was caught by the artifice, and believed every thing I said; your being here, on a visit, favoured the deceit, and the consequence is that the poor swain is too far gone in the tender passion to recede, although he is in-

formed that he has an explanation to expect, that will place the disinterestedness of his passion at issue. We shall see how he will behave, when I confess the whole trick. If he continues faithful, I shall esteem him ; if otherwise, I shall despise and will take care to be even with him."

THE END OF VOL. II.





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